Atari ST
Amiga
CBM 64/128
Spectrum
Amstrad
IBM + more

ISSUE 13 • OCTOBER 1988 • £1.50

ACE

ADVANCED • COMPUTER • ENTERTAINMENT

THE YEAR'S

100 TOP GAMES

DAZZLING ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

RATINGS • TIPS • TARGETS

STOP. PRESS

THE

MONI

History i

The first 3 years

Computer Industry sources spoke of alarm and disquiet today as US Gold – Europe' forerunners in home entertainment software – announced plans for a September releas that marks a milestone in the development of the home computer industry. Titled "HISTOR IN THE MAKING", it chronicles the early giant successes of this exciting industry and regarded by many experts to be the finest single collection of computer games ever pro duced...... a real must for computer enthusiasts and a true collector's item to be treasure for years to come.

In just four short years home computer entertainment has grown into a furious and exciting industry not only bringing much pleasure and enjoyment to many youngsters throughout Great Britain and Europe, but creating a whole industry that has made enormous strides forward in technology and the standards of entertainment.

No company has done more to advance the cause than US Gold. Deriving its name from the early activities of importing software from America and adapting it for the home market, US Gold has constantly led from the front, outstripping competitors in satisfying the demands of an increasingly discerning public. US Gold now stands firmly at the head of a very stable and vital industry leaving behind it many memorable and outstanding achievements.

Now the company has announced plans to create another shockwave – it's taking those early masterpieces from its own outstanding success and bringing them together in one collection – 15 true classics in all. A spokesman for US Gold is not surprised at the market's reaction when he commented to ou reporters: "US Gold *is* th entertainment softwar industry in the UK and no Europe.

> ***"In short, the collecti will appeal to everyone it's not just a compilati of games but a tr chronicle of the develo ment of this fantast industry of ours."***

It's hardly surprising o competitors are unhapp From the very early da we were the innovators a we therefore develope some real innovati games – games that can called classics of their tim

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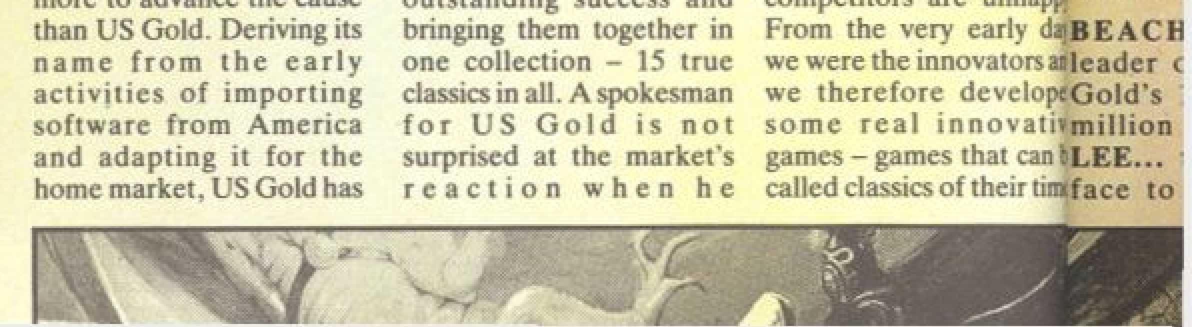


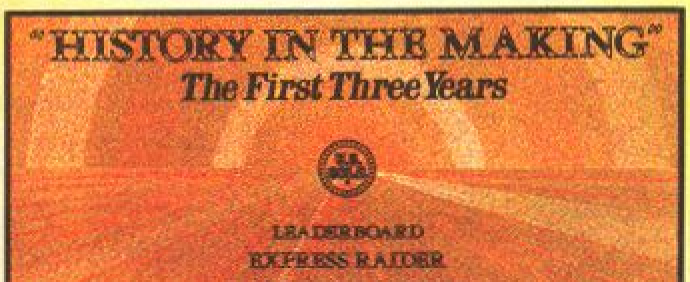
NEWS

MONDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1988

in the Making

No one has achieved so much and no one is able to command such outstanding software. Now a mature market is in residence, we decided that the time was right to make a bold statement about how significant and impressive computer software is, we therefore collected together these classics – collected from only our first three years – and are to publish them in one historic pack. Many of today's enthusiasts may have been too young to have played the originals – it's obviously a real treat for them and many of the older players will treasure the value that such a collection offers. In short, the collection will appeal to everyone – it's not just a compilation of games but a true chronicle of the development of this fantastic industry of ours.”

BEACH HEAD... the leader of the pack, US Gold's 1st quarter of a million seller. **BRUCE LEE...** the first famous face to join US Gold. **SPYHUNTER...** Bally Midway's armoured car classic became a home computer cult. **RAID...** Impressive yet controversial, Raid hit the headlines in the national press. **GOONIES...** Spielberg film translated into the first simultaneous two player interactive arcade game. **SUPERCYCLE...** the Epyx spectactular on two wheels. Fast and furious – an all-time racing classic. **WORLD GAMES...** around the world with 8 incredible, and unusual events by Epyx. **EXPRESS RAIDER...** a rootin', tootin', arcade action – the Easter hit of that year. **INFILTRATOR...** arcade, strategy simulation – all ingredients that culminated into a European No. 1. **BEACH HEAD II...** tough action sequel, another monster chartbuster by Access. **GAUNTLET...** the biggest selling computer game 1986/87, over 300,000 sold – the 1st great arcade conversion. **ROAD RUNNER...** the summer No. 1 of that year – cartoon, coin-op capers from Atari Games. **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION...** the benchmark test for all subsequent platform games, still regarded by many as one of the greatest computer games of all time. **KUNG FU MASTER...** a Gallup No. 1 – Data East – often imitated, never emulated. **LEADERBOARD...** *“This is the sports simulation of the year – if not the decade”*, Zzap 64.



The games selected to honour this special collection are each of outstanding merit in their own right ...

Besides its possession as a collection piece the package is considered by many to offer unheard of value for money and an opportunity not to be missed. Many computer enthusiasts await eagerly the mid-September release and comments such as “I've started saving now...”, “I wasn't into computers when the early releases came out, I'm looking forward to playing them now...”, “I've only heard of such games as Beach Head, now's my chance to see what I've missed...” are common amongst the players that we've talked to.

> ***“But the real winners are the buying public – it's fantastic value.”***

Perhaps one of the most informative comments was made by an industry insider: “US Gold seem to have done it again. Whilst we're all happily constructing compilations from any product we can find and offering them to the public as value-for-money packs, US Gold have put together the finest collection of classic games ever assembled and the support material and give-aways will be just as good and up to their usual amazing standard. Quite simply, I think we're all stunned once again, but the real winners are the buying public – it's fantastic value.”

Where will US Gold go from here – well no one knows, all we can really say is that if they keep going on making history like this then they can only keep going on from success to success and all computer owners will be pleased for that to continue.

100 TOP GAMES

They're **mean**, they're **tough**, they're the **100 top games of 1987/88**. These are the **tried**, **tested**, and **never-bested block-busters** of the last year. They've **got what it takes**, but **have you**?

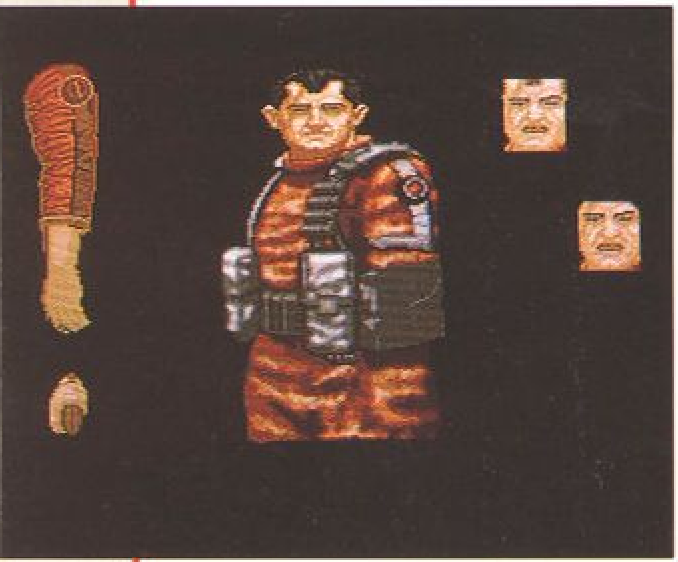
SPECIALS

38 Games Milestones

Every so often, a game **makes history**. From the moment you set eyes on it, from the moment you grasp the joystick and the **blood starts pounding**, you realise that **life in front of your computer** will **never be the same again**. Andy Wilton checks out **great moments** in **games history**.

25 Pixel Profits

Get your shades on! ACE's definitive guide to the software business **zooms in** on computer graphics. Sprites, backgrounds, and **cash, cash, cash.** Make those pixels **pay!**



A sprite is born at the Psygnosis game factory...

116 Power to the Player

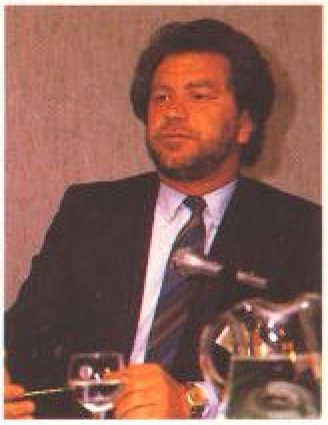
Is 16-bit, gasp!, **yesterday's technology?!** ACE **trembles** at the thought of **32-bit gamepower.**

32 It's Showtime!

ACE presents the one-and-only **unofficial guide** to the PC Show. Even if you miss the show, you can't miss this!

INTERFACE

7 News



What's been **done**, and what's been **said** this month in the world of **advanced computer entertainment**. If it **happened,** it's **here.**

Alan Sugar – what news of the Sinclair Professional?

18 Previews

These games are **out to get you**. We got them **first.**

106 Letters

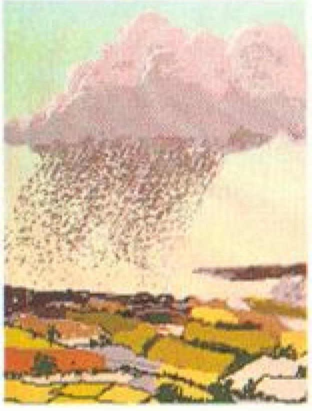
The unprintable, the unspeakable, the unbearable, **unveiled.** ACE readers discuss the **burning issues** of today, and **tomorrow.**

154 The Blitter End

Sorry, but we just have to have the last word. **This is it...**

SIGHT...

21 Weather Report



Brian Larkman, the **pixel professor**, continues his **state-of-the-art guide** to DIY graphics. This month he conjures up a series of **dazzling skyscapes** for those who make **heavy weather** out of **light work.**

23 Graphics Accounts

What!? It appears that Europeans **are** to be trusted. after all. Brian rounds up the latest news and puts you **in the picture.**

AND SOUND

98 The Food of Love

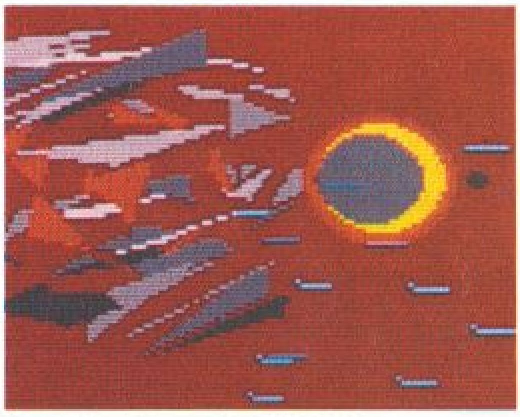
Music is the **food of love** and boy, did the emotions **run high** at this year's British Music Fair. Mark Jenkins reports...

100 In Concert

Terry Riley in concert with the **Electric Symphony Orchestra**...Computers and MIDI continue to fuel musical innovation on-stage and off.

GAMEPLAY

75 Screen Test



Page 76: *Starglider II* – Rainbird do it again.

It's here! *Starglider II* takes off – and takes most of the ACE Team with it..*Fernandez* really *must die*, and probably would if he came up against *Barbarian II*. PLUS *Starray*, *Overlander*, *Star Goose*, and a host of other **red-hot** releases

29 Arcade Revolution

EML's ST-based Intec coin-op system is going to **revolutionise** the arcades.When was the last time you saw a ***Barbarian*** in the pub? Andy Smith checks it out.

118 Tricks 'n' Tactics

Infinite lives in *Oids*; the definitive playing guide to *Football Director*; all the level codes for *Better Dead Than Alien*; and a host of tips for *Pandora*; *Leatherneck*, and *Gauntlet II*. Load, poke, and **live forever.**

THE ACE CARD

Win an Amiga!

Turn to page 15 for details of your chance to win the Amiga we're giving away – and check The Random Access Pages to see if you've won an Amiga or any of the staggering 24 software prizes we offered last month.

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102 Adventures

Ultima V gets the Pilg's **highest rating ever.** This latest Origin Systems role-playing masterpiece **delivers**. Find out why, **and how.**

114 Play by Mail

This game is the **Trolls Bottom.** No kidding. Plus news of Mitre Game's misfortunes, *Dark Blades* from KJC, and the **takeover** of *Casus Belli.*

BUY LINES

15 The Ace Card

Every month we dish out **hundreds of pounds** worth of prizes to ACE cardholders. And you can get your own card **absolutely free...**

10 Solid US Gold!

Ever fancied going on a REAL adventure? ACE and US Gold/SSI are giving away **£600 worth** of travel vouchers. Will you ever come **back down** to Earth?

110 Special Offers

Save up to **£4 off a single game**. These carefully selected titles really are **special** offers.

109 Subscription

A whole year of Britain's **best games magazine**, plus a special bonus – US Gold blockbusters at **half price.**

ACE PINK PAGES

123 Software Buyers' Guide

ACE's **monthly guide** to the games you've just **got to get.** Every issue brings a selection of specially recommended titles for your machine. **Neat**, eh?

132 Upgrade Guide

So you want a **bigger**, **better** computer, eh? The search starts here with ACE's comprehensive guide to the **powers and pitfalls** of today's **most sought-after machines.**

135 Random Access

Can N'Gar Thrombobo **vapourise** Horace Claghandle? Can **you** solve the **ACE crossword**? Can you **crack** this month's **puzzle**? Can **we** stop playing ***Daleks.*** Nope, we can't...

147 Readers' Pages

Penpals from around the world, the ACE Helpline, For Sale, user groups...We **gave you** the pages, you **filled them...**

1 YEAR OLD!

When you have a birthday, people give you presents, **right?**

Wrong. When **we** have a birthday, we give **you** presents. And the best present we could think of was this issue.

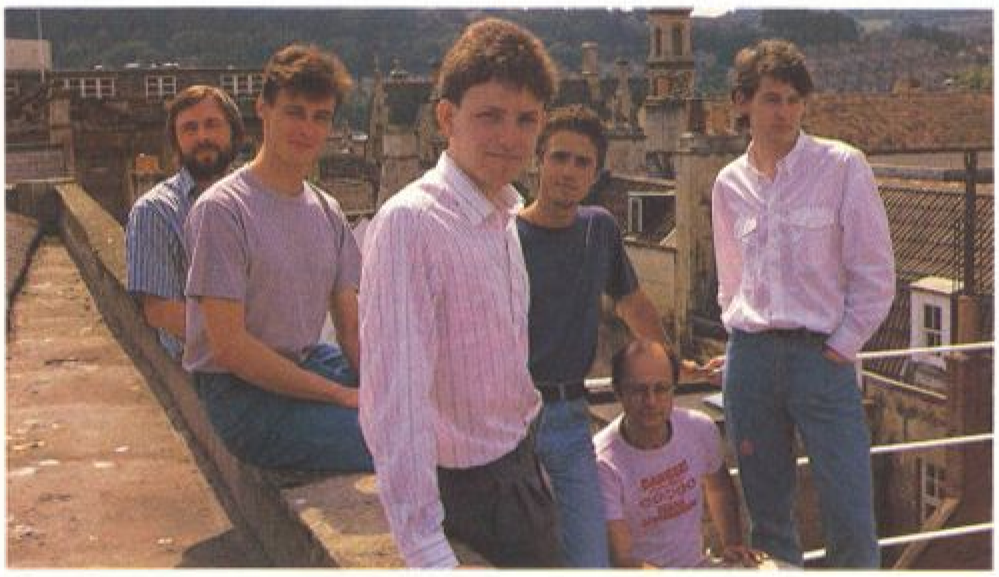
It's a **celebration** of the magazine you've helped us to build over the last twelve months.

It's **packed with features**, because your response to the magazine has spurred us on to even greater efforts. We want to make sure you get your money's worth...and more.

It's **authoritative**, because we've found ourselves writing about games for people who aren't spotty eight-year-olds. Now we can really **say what we think** about the games we play and know that you'll understand what we're on about.

It's getting **bigger** and **better** every month. because there are now tens of thousands of you out there to support us. You've stuck by us, and we'll stick by you...

If we ever let you down, set the phasers to stun...and come out looking for us. The photo below should give you some idea of just what sort of **aliens** you're after...



From left to right: Rod Lawton, Andy Smith, Andy Wilton, Trevor Gilham, Steve Cooke, Bob Wade

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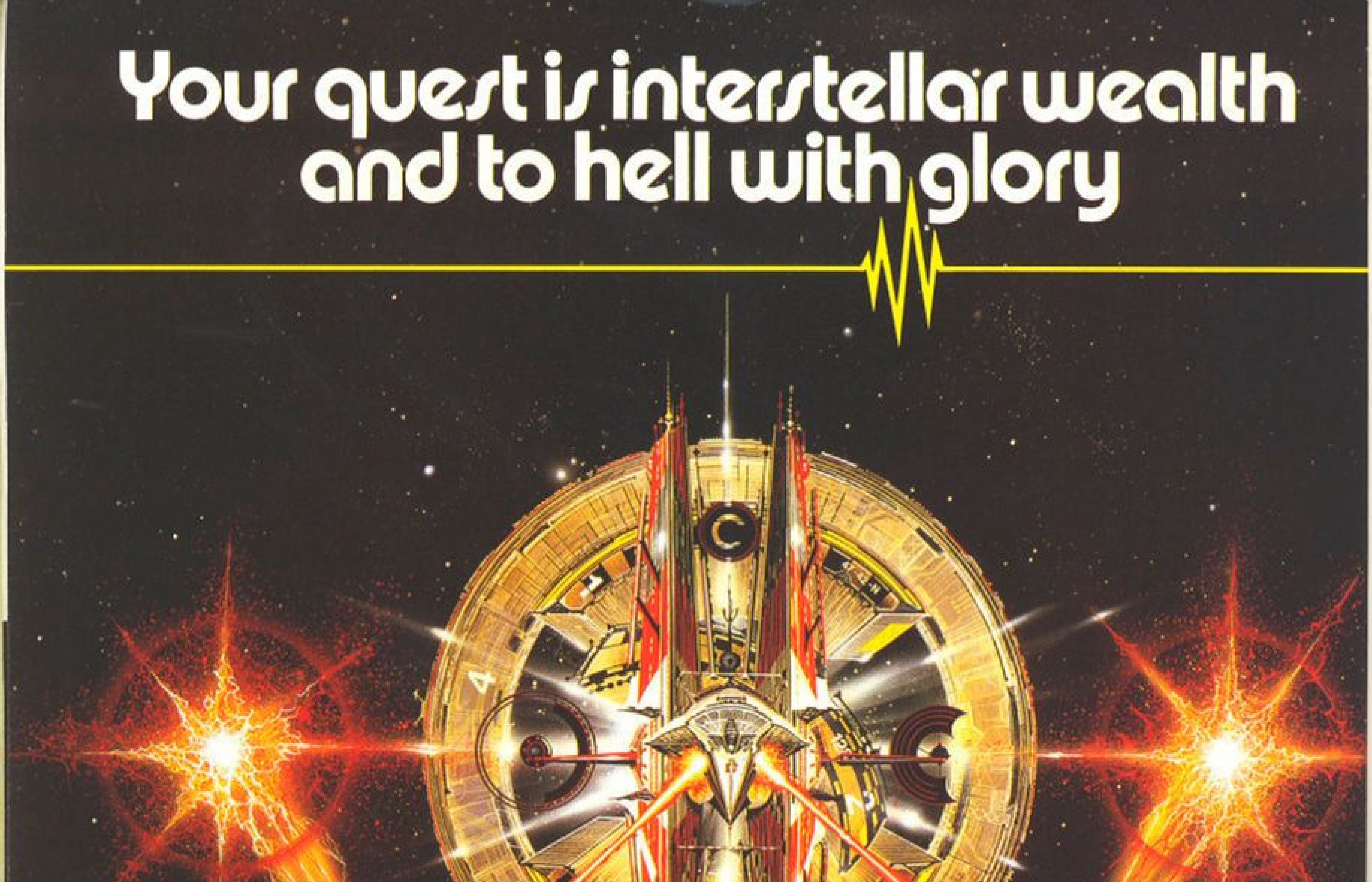
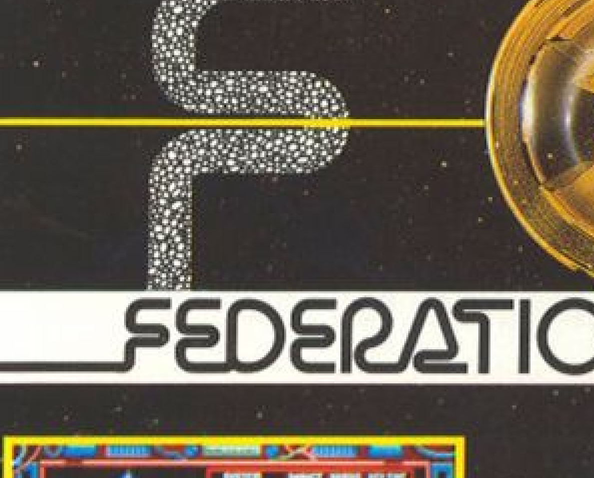
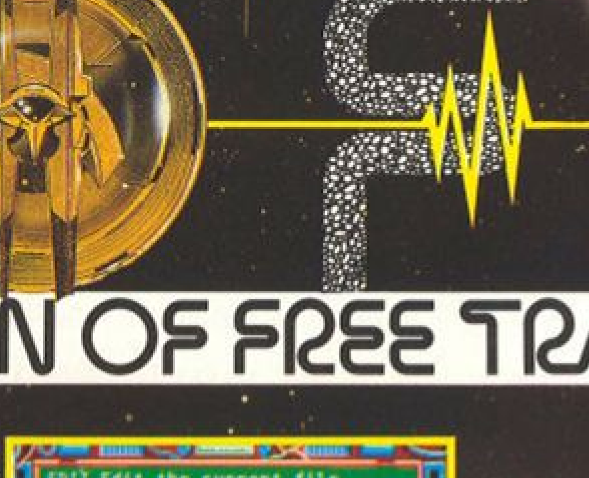

Your quest is interstellar wealth
and to hell with glory

The universe stretches before you. 8 million worlds await your exploitation. Unimaginable wealth is your destiny if you can master the art of interstellar navigation, harness the intricacies of the photon drive and repel the deadly space pirates. Forget the medals, forget the honours, forget the glory. As a member of the Federation of Free Traders you live for money and will probably die for it.

FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS





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EDIT Edit the current file
ERASE (file) Erase disc file
LOAD (file) Load from disc
SAVE (file) Save to disc
RUN  Run the programme
CAT  catalog the disc
NEW  Clear the buffer
INIT Initialise disc
NET  Hook up to Galnet
SHIPS View ship library
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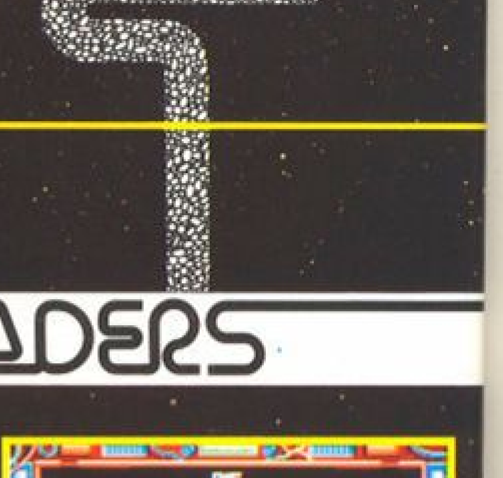

Screen shots from Atari ST version.

ATARI ST/AMIGA
£29.99

GREMLIN

ILLUSTRATION: PETER ANDREW JONES.
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Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Alpha House, 10 Carver Street,
Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

AMIGA UPSURGE

It's cheap, it's powerful, and it's played an important part in changing the fortunes of a troubled company. It's the Amiga, of course, now selling at only £399 and Commodore, once on the brink of insolvency, have just reported an astonishing six-fold leap in earnings. 'There's simply no real competition for the machine,' declared a company spokesman, 'The price cut has positioned the A500 excellently for games players...'

Meanwhile, dealers in London's Tottenham Court Road have confirmed the upsurge in Amiga sales. One chain has recently stopped selling STs altogether. 'We dropped them as soon as the prices levelled out. Atari are really worried...'claimed a salesman. Can this be true? Is the tortoise really overtaking the hare?

A year ago the ST was streaking ahead in the race to become the number one upgrade option for gamesters. It was cheap, with lots of software, and relatively reliable. By contrast, the Amiga was expensive, with little software, and prone to operating system problems. Things seem rather different these days...

First, in the USA, the Amiga is reported to be stomping on the ST at every corner. A spokesman for Atari reported that the company's policy in the States was now '..particularly concentrating on the video games market this year, which has shown enormous growth in the States recently.' When asked about the rumoured loss of ST sales to the Amiga, our source maintained that the company were 'pleased but not excited at the current trends'. Hmmm...

Second, in all European territories except Britain and France, Amiga sales are said to be topping the ST by a substantial margin.

In reply, Atari are rumoured to be launching a 'new ST' in 1989, offering 4096 colours on-screen and stereo sound. The company deny all knowledge of such a product, but there's no doubt that their Transputer technology could be channelled into a 'Super ST'. A recent suggestion in the national press concerning such a product was endorsed by an Atari spokesman as 'being along the right lines.'

Meanwhile, all Atari have to do is drop the price back to £299 for the ST and watch it fly this Christmas. Keep your fingers crossed...

SINCLAIR PROFESSIONAL NO-LAUNCH

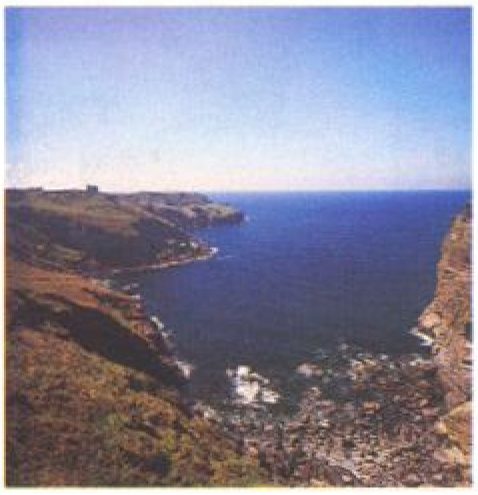
September 13th may be unlucky for some. It could be egg on the face for all of us (including ACE) if events don't turn out as predicted. We're talking, of course, about the new PC-compatible £299 games computer, now dubbed the Sinclair Professional, and reported on in last month's ACE.

Amstrad are now reported to be launching this baby on the aforementioned date. Meanwhile there have been a frantic spate of denials that the company are up to anything, have any new products, and least of all are planning such a machine. 'As soon as we announce a new product, you'll be the first to know', an Amstrad spokesperson assured us. Of course there's no such machine! And of course we'll be staking out Olympia, where the non-existent launch is supposed to be taking place, on the unlucky 13th. Get your eggs ready...

PBM GOES LIVE

These play-by-mail games are all very well, but would you fancy getting involved in one in real life? In a flash of melodramatic inspiration, Merlin's Kingdom, founders of the PBM *It's Murder!* have decided to go 'live' and involve punters in a series of blood-curdling scenarios on the Cornish cliffs.

The first 'It's Murder Holiday Weekend' is September 17th/18th and features professional actors and actresses in a 'Morte D'Arthur' investigation. For £149.50 (inc. VAT) you get the full works...meals, cocktails, a dance, and of course the chance to catch some dirty devil sticking a dagger in someone else's back, or pushing them gently over the cliffs, or...You're expected to solve the crime(s) by Sunday evening. If you're interested, or want details of future events, phone them on 0840 770935.



● Photo – Julia Brookes, Bude

The cliffs at Tintagel, Cornwall – rumoured to have been a frequent stamping ground of the late King Arthur. Now punters can fulfill their detective fantasies in real-life and enjoy a real cliffhanger ending.

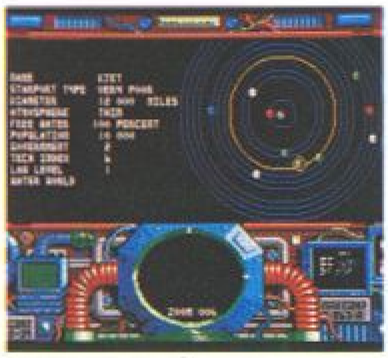
GREMLIN'S AUTUMN BLOCKBUSTER

Gremlin have revealed details of their big release for the Autumn, called *Federation of Free Traders*. Touted as 'the most realistic space simulation available on home computer to date', it's been in development for over 12 months and will be available on the ST, Amiga and PC at £29.99.

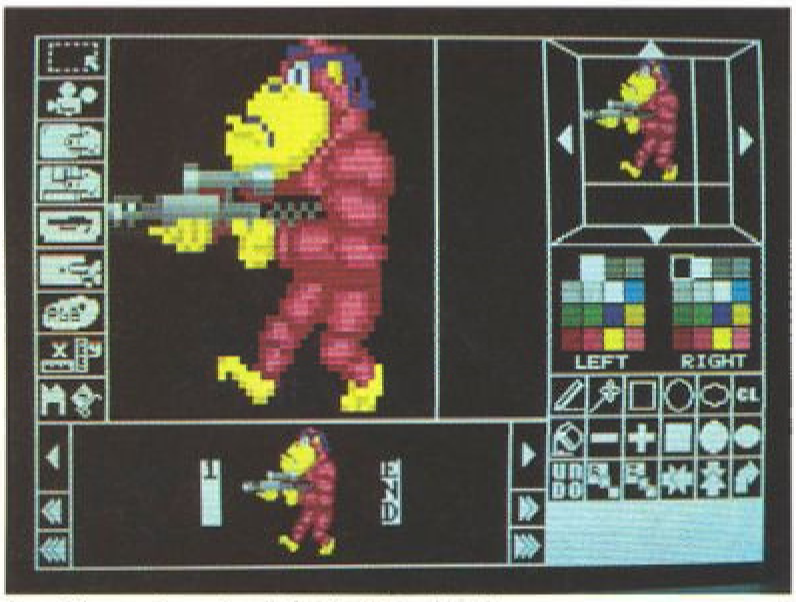
It's similar in concept to *Elite* but with an awful lot of knobs, bells, whistles and flashing lights on. Not only have you got space combat in solid 3D and trading, but it goes into much greater depth than anything previously. There's a computer within the computer that you can actually program to play little sub-games on. You can hold conversations with other pilots and gain vital information from them.

As well as improving your ship by tacking on all sorts of weapons and devices, there are a whole host of missions to be performed. Running out of places to explore will be hard as well because there are 8 million planets to visit. The 16-bit versions of *Elite* which are on the way will obviously have some stiff competition from *FFT*. Unless it's been considerably upgraded *Elite* could find itself being blasted out of the galaxy.

'The 16-bit market thrives on innovative product with lasting appeal,' Says Gremlin's MD Ian Stewart, 'Federation of Free Traders has been produced to cater to the every whim of ardent 16-bit games-players.'



***Federation of Free Traders*, from Gremlin**



A gun-toting monster produced using the *STOS* sprite editor.

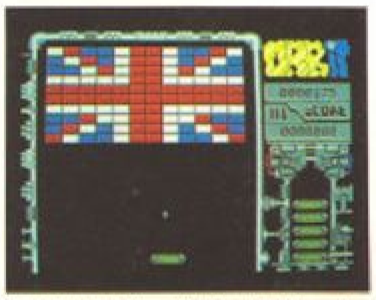
CUSTOMISED GAMES WITH STOS

Mandarin Software are releasing a games programming Basic that they say will 'transform the Atari ST into the ultimate games writing machine.' It's called *STOS* and has been developed by French programming team Jawx International.

However, you can not only create your own games but customise existing ones. Mandarin have already succesfully tested it with several games like *Bubble Bobble*, *Alien Syndrome* and *Enduro Racer*. They're keen to get software houses producing games using *STOS*. Mandarin's Chris Payne said 'I think its primary use will be in the budget sector where games have been a little dull. Good software can be produced quickly – the *Breakout* game given away with *STOS* was written in just two days using it.'

'We hope software houses will leave sprites unprotected so that you can modify the games to suit yourself. Wouldn't it be great to call up the *Bubble Bobble* sprites and edit them? That way, even if you don't want to create your own games, you can alter existing ones.'

STOS comes complete with three pre-programmed games, an icon editor, sprite editor, character set editor, music editor and a room designer, for £29.95 on three disks.



The Breakout clone that took just two days to program using *STOS*.

RARE COINS FROM SUMMIT

New budget label Summit, sister company to Alternative Software, are offering an unusual competition prize. It's a set of old coinage – pounds, shillings and pence in mint condition. All you have to do to enter is to work out how much the price of Summit games, £2.99, would be in old money.

The reason for the novel prize is a 1930s card game called *Sum-It*, based on the old currency system. Confused? Well the card game was invented by Frederick C. Hulley, father of Summit and Alternative boss Roger Hulley. Entries for the competition should be sent on a postcard to Summit Software, C/O Solution PR, 2 Wellingtonia Court, Varndean Drive, Brighton BN1 6TD. Closing date 15th October.

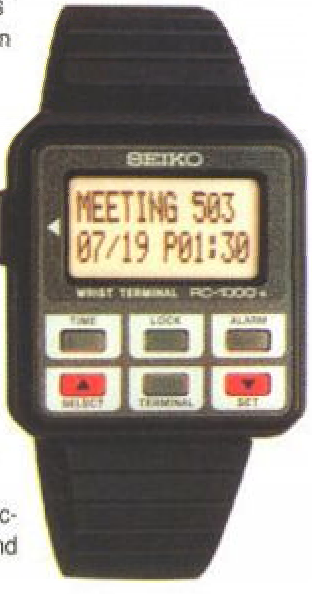
Roger Hulley, boss of Summit Software, shows off his dad's card game.

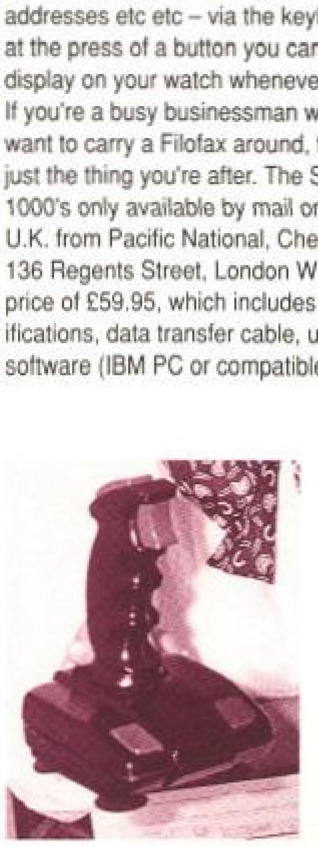
WIDGETS...

WATCH THIS SPACE

Those innovative Japanese have done it again. The boffins at Seiko have designed a wrist terminal that looks and acts like an ordinary digital watch – but can hook up directly to your PC!

The watch holds some 80 'pages' of 24 characters each. Simply plug the watch into the computer and you can type in all sorts of useful things – credit card numbers, addresses etc etc – via the keyboard. Then at the press of a button you can call up the display on your watch whenever you need it. If you're a busy businessman who doesn't want to carry a Filofax around, this could be just the thing you're after. The Seiko RC-1000's only available by mail order in the U.K. from Pacific National, Chesham House, 136 Regents Street, London W1R 5FA, at a price of £59.95, which includes the watch, specifications, data transfer cable, user manuals and software (IBM PC or compatible only).





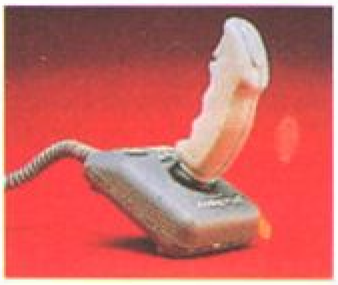
KONIX U-TURN

Those radical Welsh joystick designers/manufacturers Konix created something of a stir a couple of years ago when they launched their hand-held Speed King joystick. The joystick broke all the accepted rules of joystick design and Konix reaped the rewards by managing to sell almost 3 million of the things.

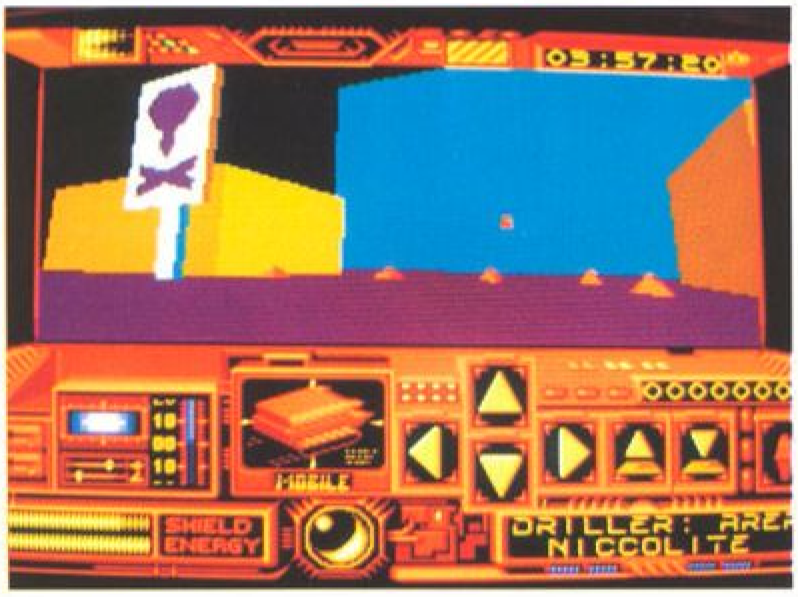
Konix are now set to launch their latest range of joysticks at this year's PC show. The names of the joysticks – Predator and Megablaster (Predator's smaller brother) – give no indication of what we can expect the things to look like. Will they be even stranger looking than the Speed King? Will we have to strap the things to our heads whenever we play our fave shoot-em-ups?

Curiously, the answer to these questions is...no. As you can see from the photo, in which company director Sandra Holloway's holding the Predator, the joystick seems to be...er...remarkably standard. O.K., so the joysticks are designed to be placed on table tops but even so, it's not got that bizarre look that we've come to expect from Konix, has it?

EARTH EXCLUSIVE



Suncom, the American joystick manufacturers, whose products are handled over here by Microprose, have been blowing their own trumpets recently heralding their latest joystick – the Analog Plus – as 'The first 21 century analog joystick. On Earth'. Now what does an analogue joystick mean to us games players? Most joysticks are digital controllers, which means they're based on switches that are either on or off. There's no middle ground between centre and left or centre and up – a direction's either selected or it isn't. Analogue joysticks, however, are based on resistors (or potentiometers). They tell the computer not only which way you moved the joystick, but how big the move was as well. Unfortunately, your machine has to have an analogue joystick port to be able to support an analogue joystick, which is no problem if you own a PC or Apple II, but it's no good to ST, Amiga, Spectrum or Amstrad owners.



INCENTIVE ECLIPSED

Incentive have announced the latest game to be produced using their Freescape programming system – *Total Eclipse*. The game is set in Egypt, but further details are embargoed till next month's issue...don't miss it!

Nearing completion are the ST and Amiga versions of the first Freescape game, *Driller*. As you can see from the screen shot above it's had a substantial redesign of the instrument panel and looks a lot better for it – review soon.

BIG BOYS GO BUDGET

Some of the biggest games of recent years are about to make a dramatic re-appearance as budget titles. Chart-topping titles such as *Bubble Bobble*, *Uridium* and *Flying Shark* are all set to scale the heights again at a lower price.

In the case of *Bubble Bobble* and *Flying Shark* they are also both coin-op licences, and there hasn't been many of them appear in budget form. *Bubble Bobble* is due out in mid-November at £1.99 on Spectrum Amstrad and C64 from Silverbird. *Flying Shark* follows from the same source in early January '89, also at £1.99 on Spectrum, Amstrad and C64.

The two big re-releases from Hewson's budget label Rack-It are *Uridium* and *Sanxion*. Both are horizontal scrolling shoot-em-ups with the emphasis very firmly on non-stop action. *Uridium* was written by Andrew Braybrook and set new standards in shoot-em-ups for the C64. Today both it and *Sanxion* (a Thalamus game by Stavros Fasoulas) have lost some of their sparkle but are still great tests of arcade skill.

Silverbird also have big re-release from three other major software houses – Mirrorsoft, Palace and Digital Integration. The Mirrorsoft games are *Biggles* (October), *Dynamite Dan 1* (October) & *2* and *Sai Combat* (September). The Palace games are *Cauldron 1* (out now) & *2* (November) and *The Sacred Armour of Antiriad* (January '89). Finally there's *Fighter Pilot* (September) and *Night Gunner* (February '89) from Digital Integration. All the games are available on the three major 8-bit computers, Spectrum, Amstrad and C64, at £1.99.

Budget *Sanxion*

SNIPPETS...

● UP AND COMING TITLES FOR YOUR MICRO

BATTLE CHESS

Interplay/Electronic Arts

Amiga	**£24.95dk**
IBM PC	**£24.95dk**

Interplay Productions, who were responsible for *The Bard's Tale* series of games, are about to release their first title as an independant software house. *Battle Chess* combines the strategy of chess with combat action and contains some 4Mb of animation and approximately 400k of digitised sound. The Amiga version will be here first with the PC version following shortly after.

JORDAN VS BIRD: ONE ON ONE

Electronic Arts

C64	**£14.95dk**
IBM PC	**£24.95dk**

Michael 'The Slammer' Jordan, top scorer of the Chicago Bulls and Larry 'The Shooter' Bird from the Boston Celtics face each other in this basketball sim which is the follow-up to E.A's most successful sports sim of all time, *Dr J and Larry Bird Go One on One*. There are three events to compete in including the Slam Dunk Competition.

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Ocean

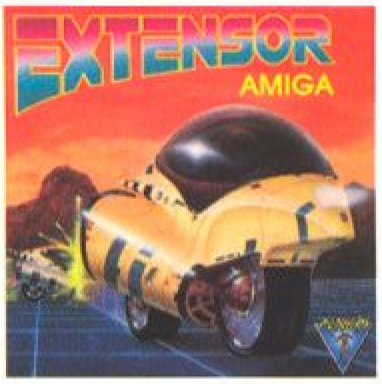
Amstrad	**£9.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
C64	**£9.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Spectrum	**£9.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Amiga		**£24.95dk**
Atari ST		**£19.95dk**

Four years after Ocean first released *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* – a terrific game even by today's standards – we see the sequel. The game features 10 events including 100m sprint, hurdles, pole vault and javelin. Before you compete in the events though, you'll have to undergo a strenuous work-out with weights in the gym.

EXTENSOR

Interceptor

Amiga	**£9.99dk**
Atari ST	**£9.99dk**



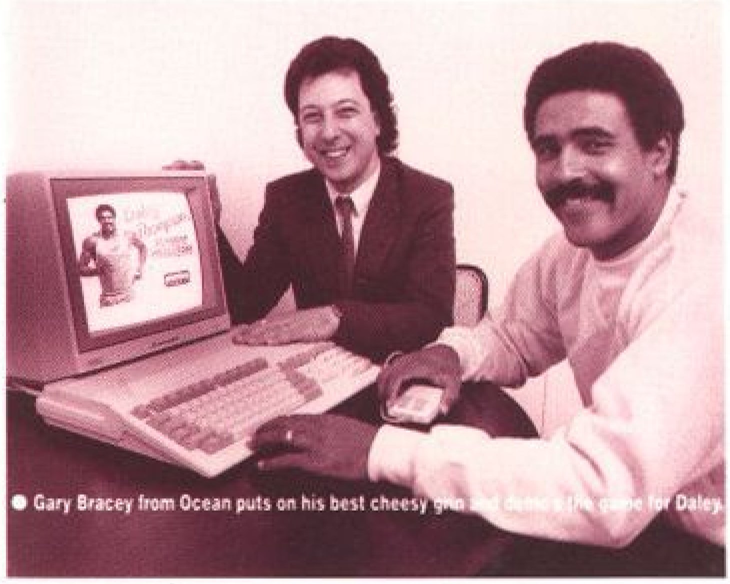
Climb aboard your lazercycle and prepare to compete in the Extensor Tournament on the planet Spazm. Your lazercycle emits energy trails as it moves and to succeed in the game, you have to force the computer opponents into the energy trails.

THE MARS SAGA

Electronic Arts

C64/128	**£14.95dk**

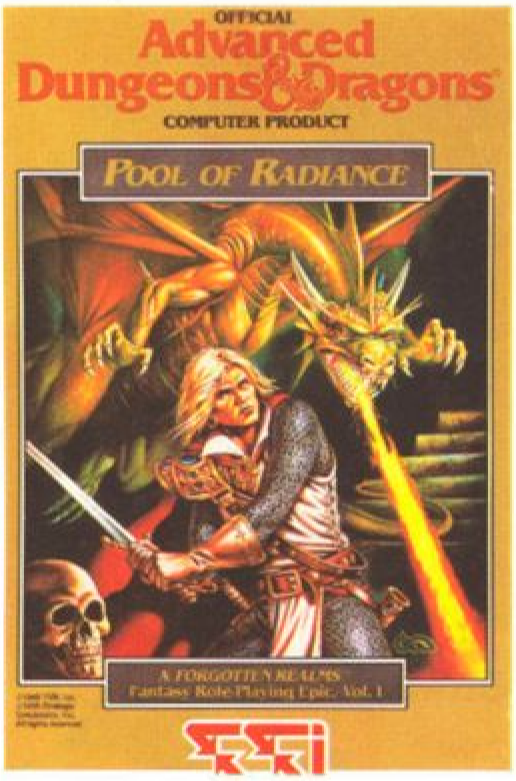
This science-fiction role-playing game offers the depth of play similar to *The Bard's Tale* series of games in a game set on Mars. Having crash landed on the planet, your only hope of escape is to become a bounty hunter and earn some dosh so you can buy your way back. The game included the oh-so-trendy auto-mapping option. *Mars Saga*'s due for release sometime in October.



● Gary Bracey from Ocean puts on his best cheesy grin and demos the game for Daley.

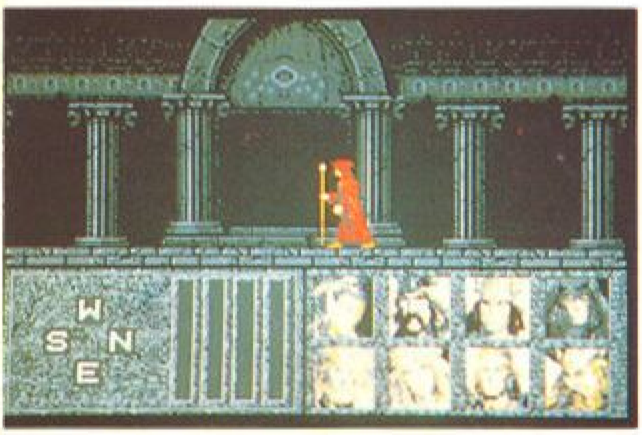
GO WILD!

...and go free of charge! US Gold/SSI are celebrating the launch of their two games based on the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* products by offering you the chance to create your own real-life adventure.



The *Dungeons and Dragons* game concept has become almost a household word these days. The system enables a group of players to enact their fantasies in a complex and detailed environment that is built up by the elected Dungeon Master according to the rules of the *D&D* game system.

D&D has spawned dozens of imitators and is by far the best known role playing game (RPG) on the market. For a long time now computer gamesters who were aware of the possibilities of implementing it on a micro have waited for someone to take the leap. Now US Gold and SSI are out to answer their prayers.



Two games are being released intially. The first, *Pool of Radiance*, is a fantasy role-playing epic in which the player must sally forth to save the city of Phelan from an invasion of evil forces. You don't do this all on your own, however, since in true RPG style you first create a group or 'party' of characters – each with his/her own attributes – and then lead this party into action. Much of the interest in this sort of game comes from the identification you build up with the characters – and losing a favourite can be a traumatic experience!

The second game, *Heroes of the Lance*, is a more arcadey offering. Although you still control a party of characters with different attributes, the emphasis is on action as well as adventure as you descend into the ruined temple of Xak Tsaroth to destroy the dragon Khisanth and retrieve the fabled Disks of Mishakal.

These games have been long awaited. Both US Gold and SSI are obviously certain that they've given the programs everything they've got. Stand by for the definitive reviews in ACE, and meanwhile, enter the competition and start planning an adventure of your own – for real!

THE PRIZES

First prize is a stunning £600 travel voucher that you can spend in any way you choose. Blow it all on a trip for two to the grand old USA, or spend a few weekends in Paris, or saunter over to Bombay...You choose, you travel, but you pay for the postcards home!

Second prize is a complete set of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* books, worth up to £60. So even if you can't travel in real life, you can still travel into inner worlds of fantasy and imagination...if you've got the guts!

PACKED WITH FEATURES!

Just check out these *Pool of Radiance* features...

- Cities, dungeons, and encounters shown in 3D perspective.
- Personalise your heroes with their own weapons, armor, and colours.
- Up to 8 characters including two computer-controlled characters (NPCs) in your party.
- Four classes, six races, nine 'alignments' (moral attributes).
- Full adventurer's Journal supplied complete with history, maps, clues, and 'rumors'.
- Translation wheel to convert Elvish and Dwarvish into English.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Fill in the entry form on this page (a photocopy will do fine, but only one entry per household, please) and answer the three questions correctly, then post it off to us at:

SSI Competition, ACE Magazine, 4 Queen Street, BATH BA1 1EJ

Your entry must reach us before 6th October 1988. The first prize will be awarded to the first entry drawn at random from those entries received by the closing date above. Second prize will go to the second correct entry drawn. Get to it!

THE RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing, US Gold/SSI, or of any company involved in the sale and distribution of ACE magazine are not eligible for entry.
2. Closing date October 6th 1988.
3. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
4. Only one entry per household.
5. No purchase of ACE magazine is necessary and photocopies of the entry form are acceptable.

ENTRY FORM

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

.... **TEL NO** ....

1. In Pool of Radiance, which city has been overrun by monsters?

....

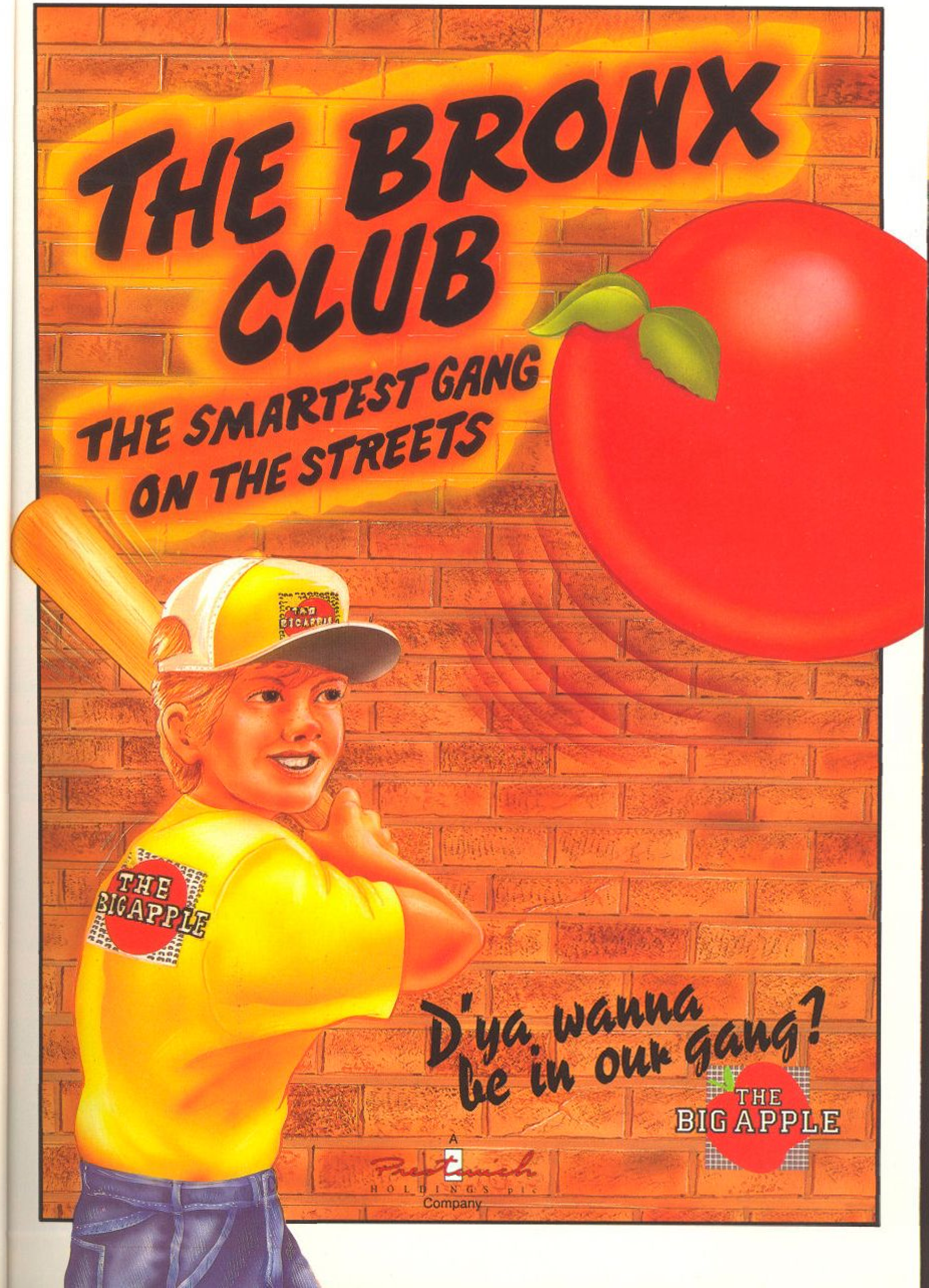
2. Which ruined temple do your party of characters penetrate in Heroes of the Lance?

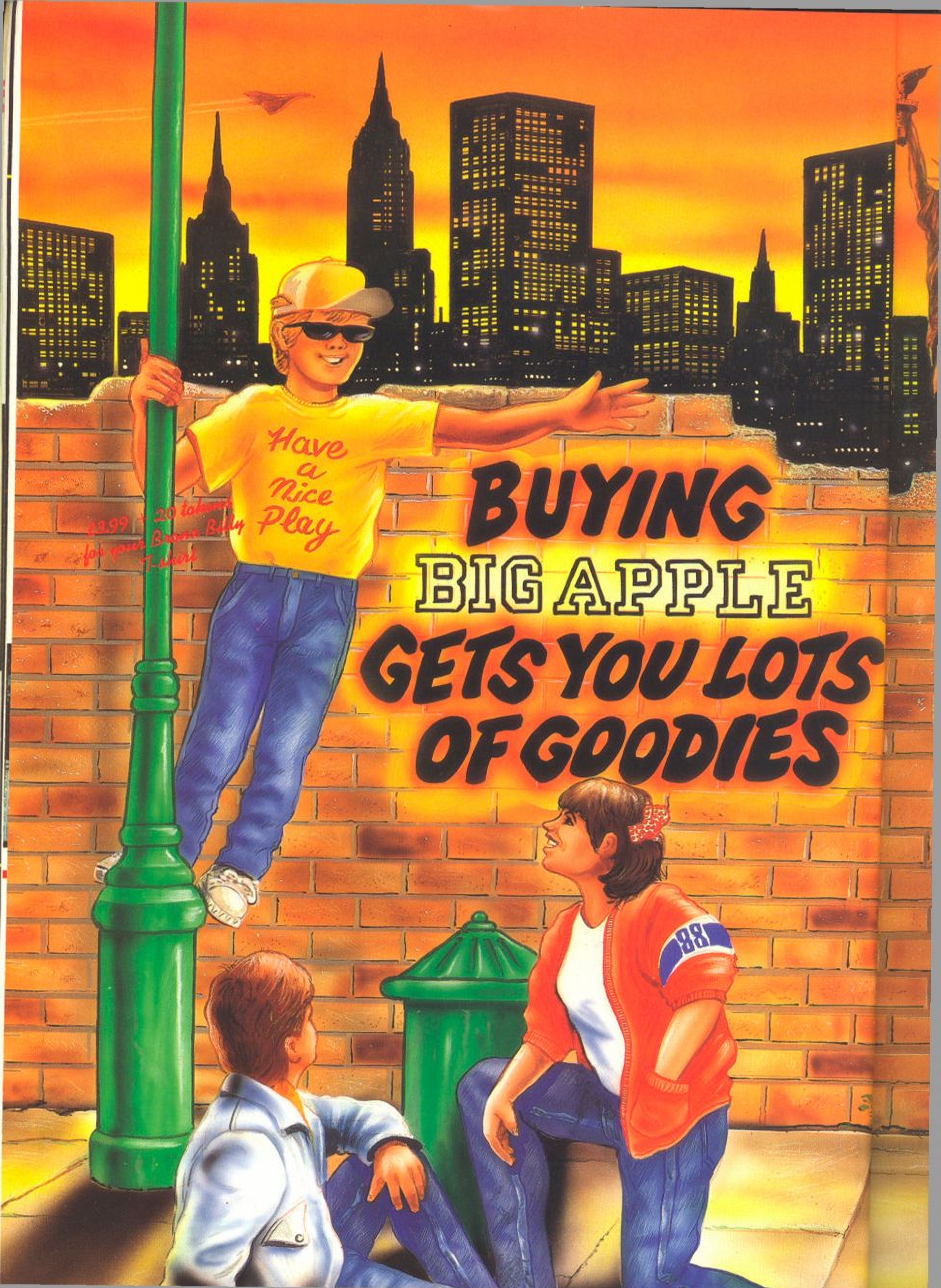
....

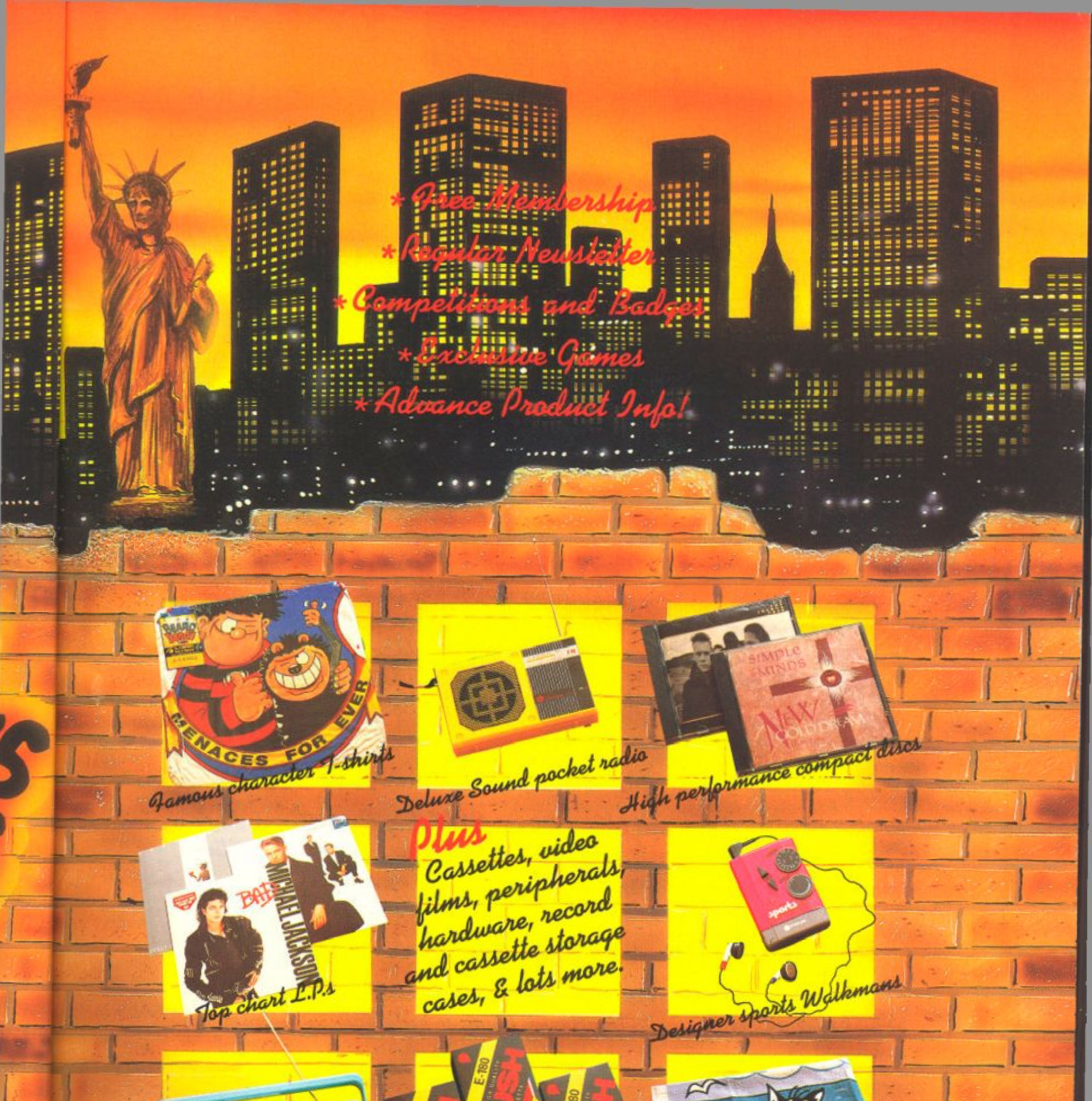
3. What does NPC stand for?

....

What computer do you own? ....


THE BRONX CLUB
THE SMARTEST GANG ON THE STREETS
THE BIG APPLE
THE BIGAPPLE
D'ya wanna be in our gang?
THE BIG APPLE
A Prestwich HOLDINGS plc Company


Have a Nice Play
£3.99 + 20 tokens for your Bronx Billy T-shirt
BUYING
BIG APPLE
GETS YOU LOTS OF GOODIES
88


* Free Membership
* Regular Newsletter
* Competitions and Badges
* Exclusive Games
* Advance Product Info!
Famous character T-shirts
Deluxe Sound pocket radio
High performance compact discs
Plus
Cassettes, video films, peripherals, hardware, record and cassette storage cases, & lots more.
Top chart L.P.s
Designer sports Walkmans
Super stereo cassette players
Triple pack video tapes
'Super Star' beach towels

If you're street wise join The Bronx Club!

Join Bronx Billy in his club and gain access to an ever changing range of superb leisure products.

Simply cut off the Apple Tokens, found on all Big Apple products, and swap them for anything you desire.

Street Rules

THE BRONX CLUB

To join, simply send an 8"×10" stamped addressed envelope to:
Bronx Billy, c/o The Bronx Club, P.O. Box 910, London N11 1TJ.

We'll Rush to You…

…your very own membership pack, including your personal membership card and number. Always remember to quote your membership number along with your full name and address, when corresponding with the Bronx Club.

Take Your Pick…

…you can choose absolutely anything you desire from the Bronx Club catalogue, so remember to save the Apple Tokens, found on all Big Apple products, and put them away safely in the envelope provided. When you've chosen your product and collected enough tokens, send us your order and we'll mail you your goods.

Freebies…

…upon enrolment you will also receive a FREE Big Apple Game Badge. Try and win more Bronx Billy merchandise by entering all our Club Newsletter Competitions exclusive to members.

Special Privileges…

…yes! you get specialist treatment too! We are releasing some fantastic games that are exclusive to the Bronx Club, so only you, will be able to play them!

No Obligation…

…You're welcome to use the Bronx Club as often as you like. There is no obligation to purchase or redeem tokens for products in order to retain club membership.

So don't delay, sign up today!

Signed
BRONX BILLY

BRONX BILLY

©Copyright 1988

p.s.
Have a Nice Play

THE DECODER PROGRAM

This short program listing will DECODE the 4-letter codes printed below next to the prizes. It turns each code into a five-digit number such as the one printed on your ACE card. All you have to do is type-in the program using the instructions for your computer printed below.

Then RUN the program. It will ask you to input each of the prize codes in turn and will then reveal on screen the winning numbers. If your number comes up, YOU CAN IMMEDIATELY CLAIM YOUR PRIZE!

If you are unable to get the program to work, a list of the winning numbers, correctly decoded, may be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to:
ACE October winners list, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ

C64, CPC, ST, AMIGA version

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 28:INPUT "Code";B$
20 B=0:FOR C=1 TO 4:B=B*26
30 D=ASC(MID$(B$,C,1))
40 IF D>90 THEN D=D-32
50 B=B+90-D:NEXT C:PRINT "Winning
Number is";B:NEXT A
```

SPECTRUM version

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 28:INPUT "Code";B$
20 LET B=0:FOR C=1 TO 4:LET B=B*26
30 LET D=CODE B$(C TO)
40 IF D>90 THEN LET D=D-32
50 LET B=B+90-D:NEXT C:PRINT "Winning Num-
ber is";B:NEXT A
```

TYPING IN THE PROGRAM

SPECTRUM

48K: Power on, and type the Spectrum listing in as shown, pressing ENTER at the end of each line. To get the word CODE in line 30, hold down caps shift and symbol shift keys together and press the letter I key. When you've typed all five lines in correctly, press R (for RUN) followed by ENTER. Now type in the codes one at a time, pressing ENTER after each one: the program will stop after you've typed in all 25 codes.

128K: Select 128K BASIC mode from the start-up menu and type in the Spectrum listing as shown, hitting ENTER at the end of each line. Type RUN, hit the ENTER key again and type the codes in as for the 48K Spectrum above.

C64/128

Type the listing in as shown, hitting the RETURN key at the end of each line. Type RUN (Don't use the RUN/STOP key), hit RETURN and then type the codes in one after the other.

AMSTRAD CPC

Type the listing in as shown, hitting the RETURN key (6128) or the larger of the two ENTER keys (464 or 664) at the end of each line. Type RUN and hit RETURN or the large ENTER key again - don't use CONTROL and the small ENTER key here - and type the codes in one after the other.

ATARI ST

Put the LANGUAGE disk in the drive and switch the ST on. Double-click first on the drive A icon and then on the BASIC.PRG icon to boot Basic. Type EDIT and press the RETURN key. Now type the listing in, hitting RETURN after each line, and press the F10 key when you've typed all five lines in. Now type RUN, press RETURN again, and type the codes in one at a time.

AMIGA

Switch on, put your 'Workbench' disk into the drive and wait for the desktop to appear. Now put your 'Amiga Extras' disk in the drive, double-click on the EXTRAS icon and then double-click on the AMIGA BASIC icon. Type the listing in as shown, hitting RETURN after each line, and then click on the BASIC (rather than the LISTING) window. Type RUN, hit RETURN and then type the codes in one at a time.

OTHER MACHINES

The 'C64, CPC etc' listing is standard MicroSoft Basic, so it ought to work on most micros. If you can't get it to work on yours, write to us for a list of winners — details of this are printed above.

RULES

1.This promotion is open to everyone with the exception of employees of Future Publishing Ltd and anyone involved in the distribution or retailing of Advanced Computer Entertainment magazine.
2.Ownership of the ACE card is limited to one per household.
3.Each four-letter code printed in the magazine corresponds to a winning 5-digit number on one of the ACE cards.
4.The codes must be correctly decoded using the program printed each month in this magazine.
5.Claims for prizes must be received by first post on the closing date at the latest. The value of any unclaimed prizes will be carried forward to future issues.
6.If, due to a production error, more than one person claims a single prize, the publishers reserve the right to divide the prize between the claimants.
7.In the event of any dispute, the decision of the publishers is final.

WIN AN AMIGA!

Has your ACE card come up trumps this month? There are 25 great prizes.

For everyone who's received a free ACE card (if not, see below on how to get one), here's another great opportunity to win prizes.

Using the **NEW** program (see **NEW PROGRAM!** box), just type in the 28 new 4-letter codes printed on this page. If the program converts one of them into your personal number, you're a winner!!

WE WANT A WINNER!

Note that we are now printing FOUR winning codes for the ACE card. If the owner of the 1ST CLAIM code hasn't claimed his prize by the closing date it goes to the owner of the 2ND CLAIM code. If he hasn't claimed his prize by then it goes to the owner of the 3RD CLAIM code...and so on. Should the 1st Claim owner claim his prize, the owners of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th claim codes automatically qualify for one of our SECOND PRIZES.

NEW PROGRAM!

In order to accomodate the **z** number of entries for the ACE card competition we've had to modify the program slightly. **MAKE SURE** you type in the revised program.

LOOK AT THESE PRIZES!

ONE 1st PRIZE: *AMIGA + COLOUR MONITOR*

1st claim **WZUW** 2nd claim **VNUZ** 3rd claim **YBUZ** 4th claim **UYAW**

FOUR 2nd PRIZES: *£50 of software – chosen from the ACE Special Offer pages*

The winning codes: **ZVVA • UTKY • YMUV • YAOR**

TEN 3rd PRIZES: *£25 of software – chosen from the ACE Special Offer pages*

The winning codes: **YUKW • UNSW • WMRC • ZFWF • WUDG • ZUVA • YGPG • WQVG • UZAF • YOHY**

TEN 4th PRIZES: *A year's free subscription to ACE magazine*

The winning codes: **YFZI • VGEZ • WNJK • UUXL • ZQIA • WKDE • YJMW • ZZME • VVTA • XYDR**

HOW TO CLAIM A PRIZE

If you are one of the winners, you may claim your prize simply by posting us your ACE card together with a note saying which prize you are claiming (and from which issue of ACE).

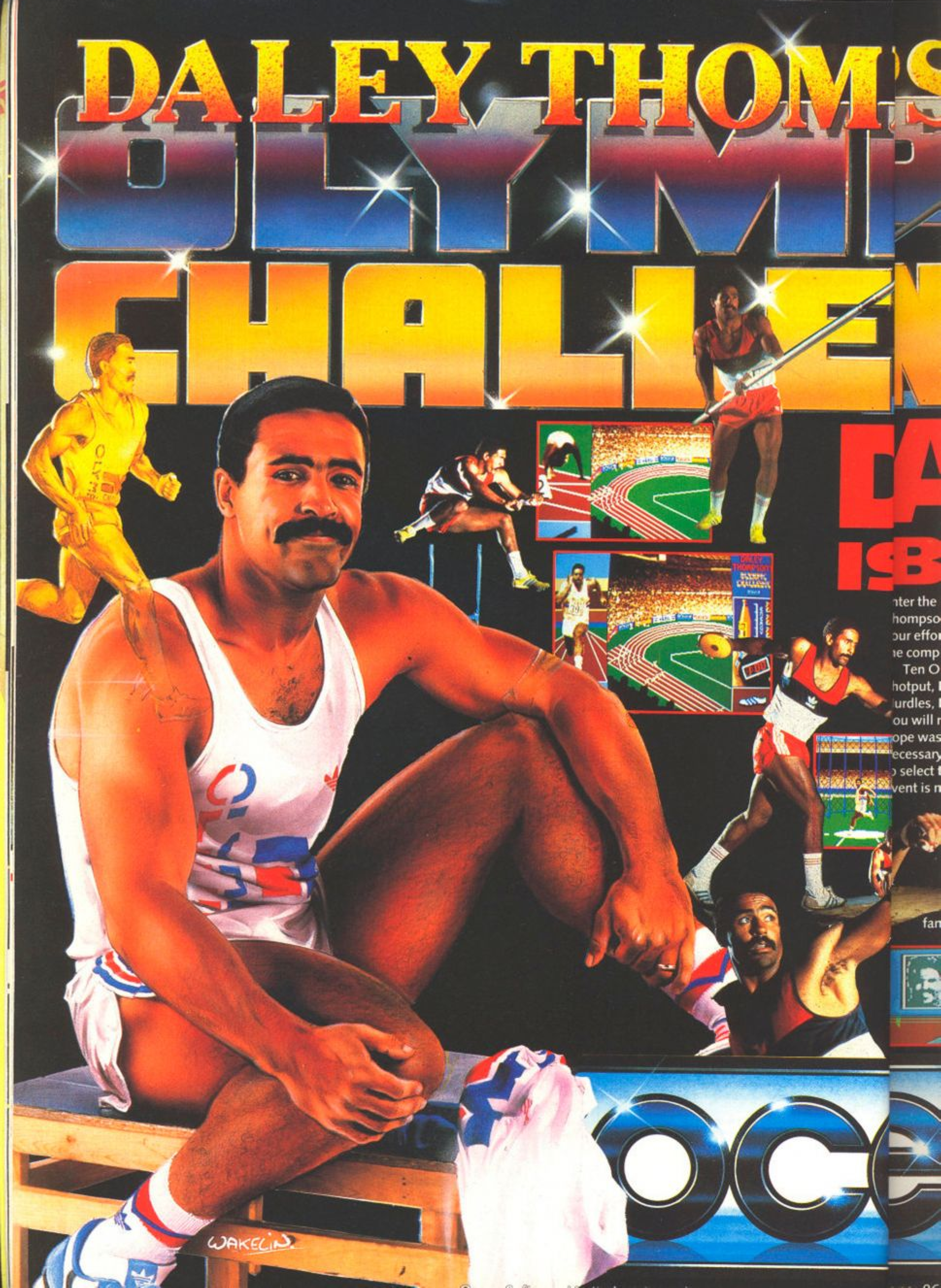
If your prize is for software, list carefully the software you would like from the selection printed in the ACE Reader Offer pages (111-112).

Assuming your claim is valid, we will forward your prize and return your card within 28 days (probably much sooner).

Post to: ACE CARD PRIZE CLAIM, 4 Queen Street,
Bath BA1 1EJ ***Closing date for claims October 12th, 1988***

HOW TO OBTAIN AN ACE CARD

If you missed the April issue of ACE, you may obtain an ACE card free of charge by sending us a stamped self-addressed envelope together with a signed statement saying that neither you nor anyone else in your household already owns an ACE card. Apply to:
ACE CARD REQUEST, 4 Queen St. Bath BA1 1EJ
(This offer valid while stocks last).


DALEY THOMS
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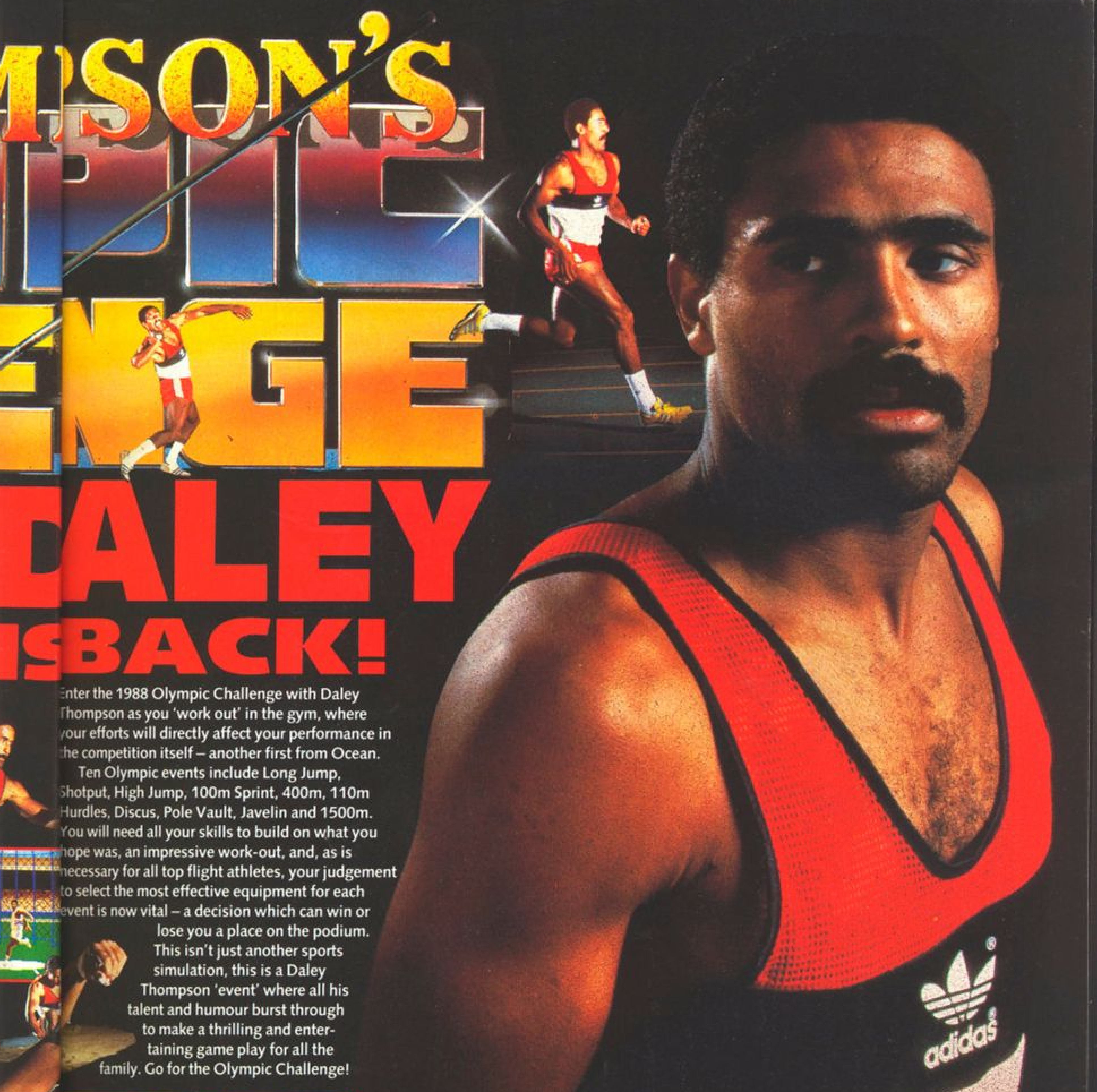


DALEY
IS BACK!

Enter the 1988 Olympic Challenge with Daley Thompson as you 'work out' in the gym, where your efforts will directly affect your performance in the competition itself – another first from Ocean.

Ten Olympic events include Long Jump, Shotput, High Jump, 100m Sprint, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin and 1500m. You will need all your skills to build on what you hope was, an impressive work-out, and, as is necessary for all top flight athletes, your judgement to select the most effective equipment for each event is now vital – a decision which can win or lose you a place on the podium.

This isn't just another sports simulation, this is a Daley Thompson 'event' where all his talent and humour burst through to make a thrilling and entertaining game play for all the family. Go for the Olympic Challenge!

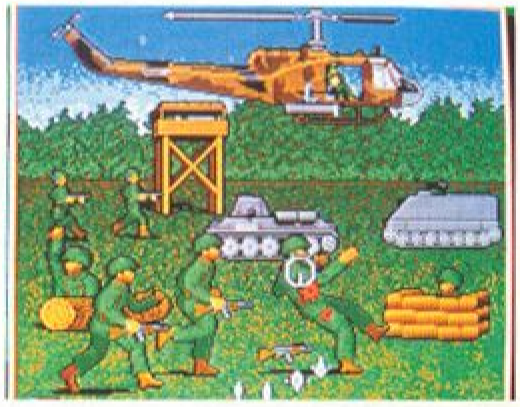
AMSTRAD COMMODORE SPECTRUM	AMSTRAD COMMODORE SPECTRUM	ATARI ST
£9.95	14.95	19.95
CASSETTE	DISK	

Also available for your Amiga

ione: 061 832 6633 · Telex: 669977 OCEANS G · Fax: 061 834 0650

What have those software houses got cookin'? ACE takes its monthly look into the games oven to see how those hot forthcoming titles are doin'. Will they turn out to be finger lickin' good? Or just half-baked?

HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

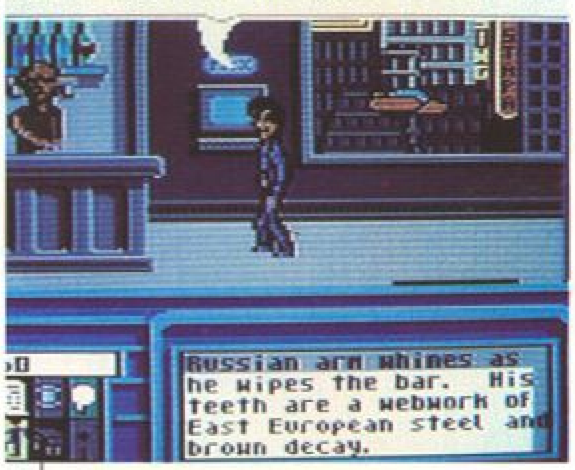


ST - Waste those soldiers...destroy those helicopters...

VETERAN

● Software Horizons

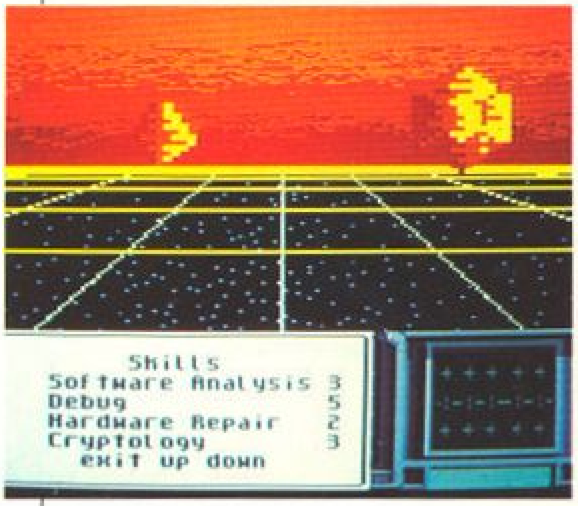
This brand new software house has been formed to produce top quality software for the 16-bit machines. One of their first games will be Veteran, an exciting simulation in which you take the role of a crack commando. The game features three seperate missions, with the final mission being the destruction of the enemy headquarters.



Anything else you want to tell me?

Russian arm whines as he wipes the bar. His teeth are a webwork of East European steel and brown decay.

C64 - Dirty Den in Japan?

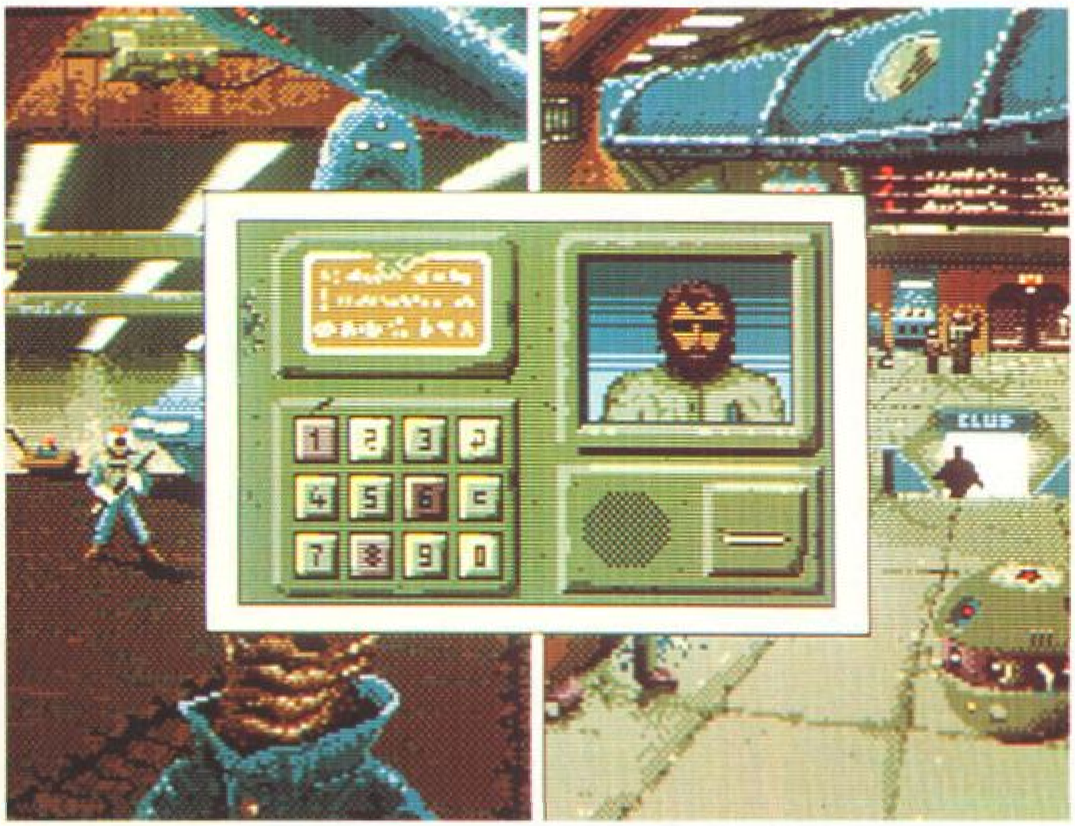


C64 - You'll need to improve your ratings if you hope to survive.

NEUROMANCER

● Electronic Arts

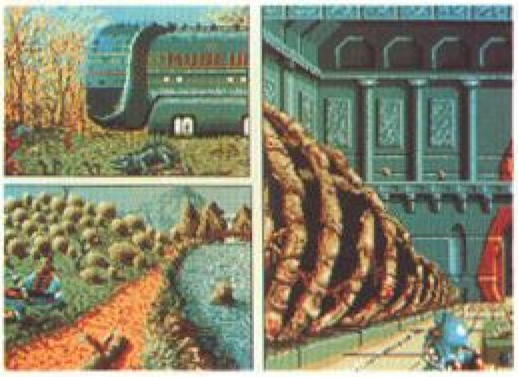
Twenty-first century Japan's the setting for this game based on the William Gibson novel *Neuromancer*. Gibson's credited with creating the science fiction sub-culture of Cyberpunk that's influence films like Robocop, Aliens and Blade Runner. The game features a digitised soundtrack by that wacky American punk band DEVO and was written specially for the game. In Neuromancer the player plays the part of a computer hacker looking out for better equipment and information. Have you got what it takes to break into government and corporate computer systems?



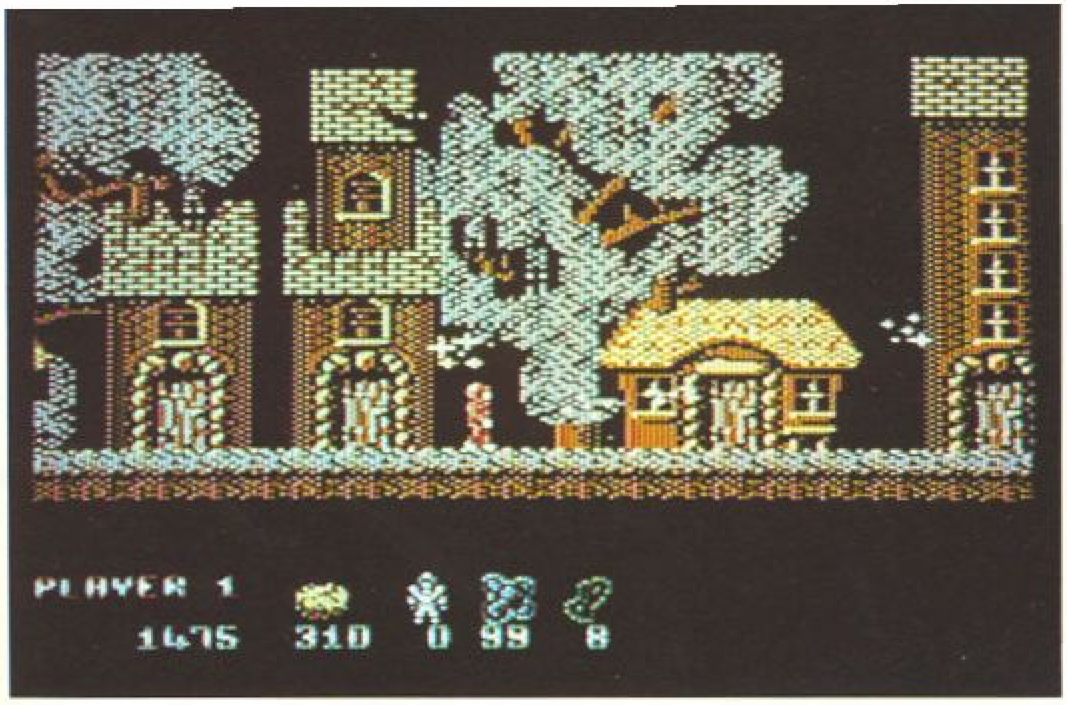
ST - interacting with a wall mounted information bank.

B.A.T. ● Ubi Soft

As a member of the BAT organisation (Bureau des Affaires Temporelles) in the twenty first century, you've got a very important mission to complete. Fortunately, you'll be able get help from the computer that's been transplanted into your forearm which (amongst other things) regulates your vital functions. The game's got all that Gallic flair we've come to expect from the French with all the action portrayed through on-screen windows.



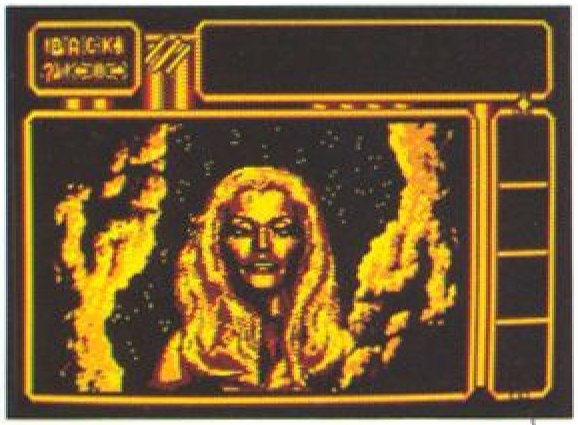
ST - Stunning graphics, but then it is a French game



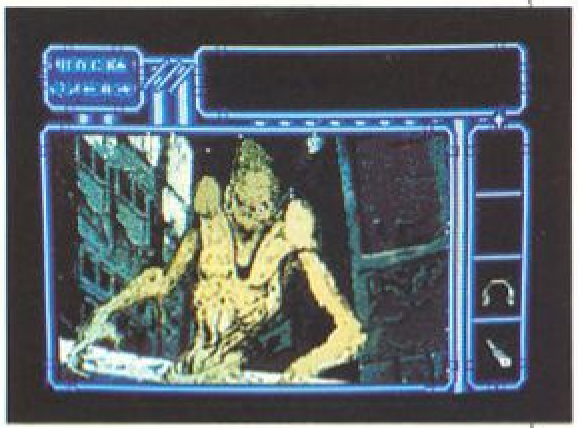
C64 - Kryllis is up to his tricks and the foul are abroad.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE ● Firebird

A fight to the death against the evil mage Krillys is your task in this latest Graftgold game. Monsters stalk the streets and demons prowl the land and devour the unwary. Playing either Tartarus or Teron in this two-player game, you've got to return the Zodiac Power Source to its rightful place and so rid the land of these foul beings.



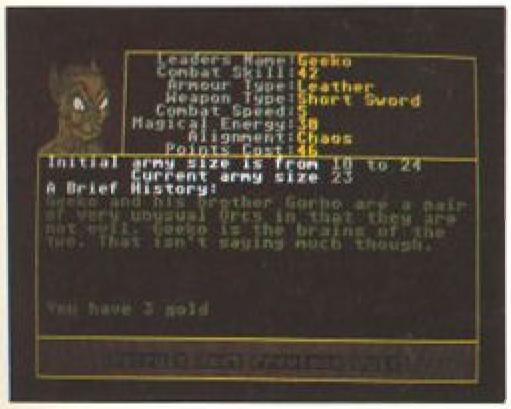
PC - Just one of the game's many characters you're able to converse with.



ST - Why you should want to have anything to do with this charcater remains to be seen!

FINAL COMMAND
● Ubi Soft

In this game you play the part of a space mercenary. You've just been hired by a Confederation to retrieve the data banks from a space station that's been attacked by an unknown enemy, so you'll certainly have your work cut out. That's if you manage to figure out how to fly the space shuttle you've been lent and get there in the first place!



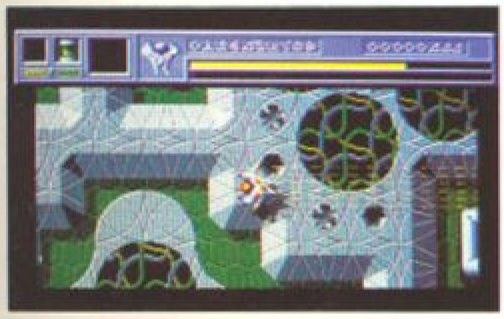
```
Leaders Name:Geeko
Combat Skill:42
Armour Type:Leather
Weapon Type:Short Sword
Combat Speed:5
Magical Energy:38
Alignment:Chaos
Points Cost:46
Initial army size is from 10 to 24
Current army size 23
A Brief History:
Geeko and his brother Gorbo are a pair
of very unusual Orcs in that they are
not evil. Geeko is the brains of the
two. That isn't saying much though.

You have 3 gold
```

ST - Just one of over 60 game characters. Handsome devil isn't he?

THE BLACK ORCHID
● Mundane Software

Mundane Software are a new name in the software world, writing games specifically for the 16-bit machines. Their first game's called The Black Orchid and is a fantasy battle for one or two players on the ST.

The game takes place on an island split between good and evil. Both sides have one half of the Black Orchid Staff, and wants the other. But before you get the other player's staff you'll have to capture their citadel. The game's initially only available mail order.



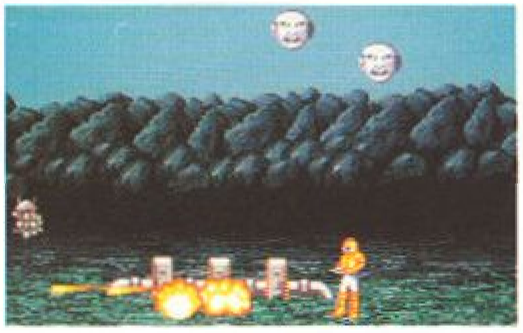
Amiga - Good looking, let's hope it plays as well.

FUSION
● Electronic Arts

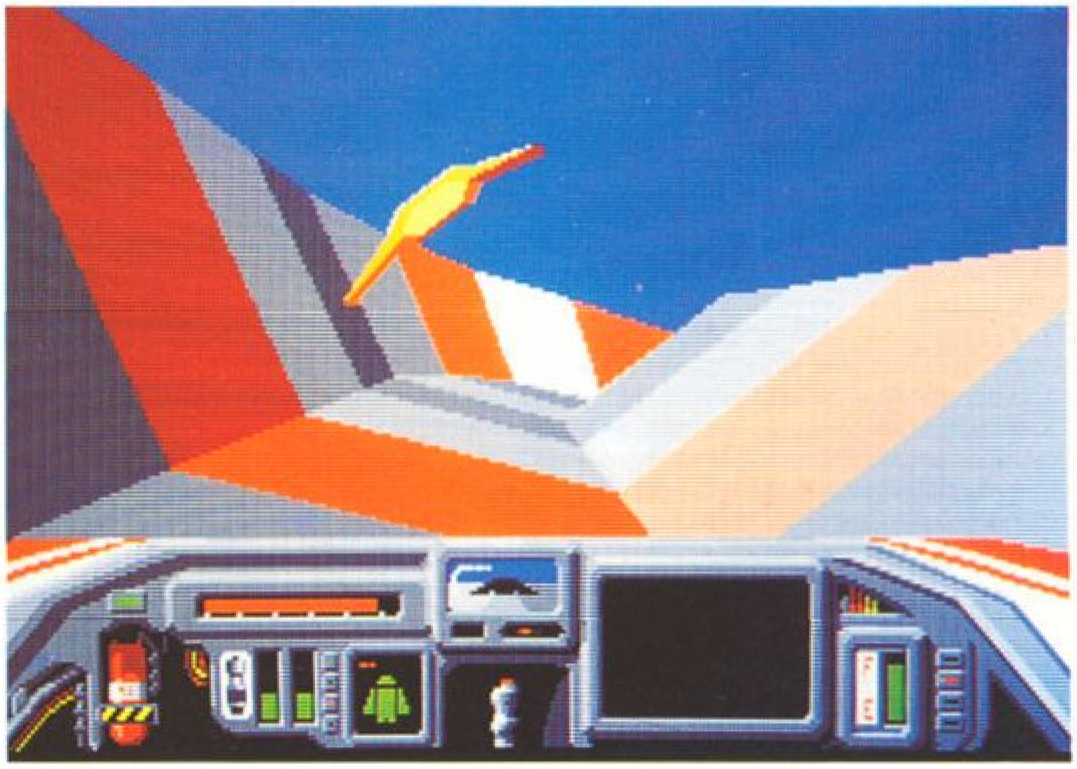
Another product that E.A. have developed in the U.K. is this game that combines arcade and strategy elements. In your spacecraft you're trying to collect the scattered remnants of an ancient and powerful bomb. Strategic planning is required as you locate clues, identify switches and find the right keys to open doors and move between levels.

LUXOR
● Software Horizons

In this space fantasy you have to battle through three planets of furious action to rescue a beautiful princess. The game was produced for this new software house by Paradox Software Ltd, who have some 20 16-bit titles to their credit.



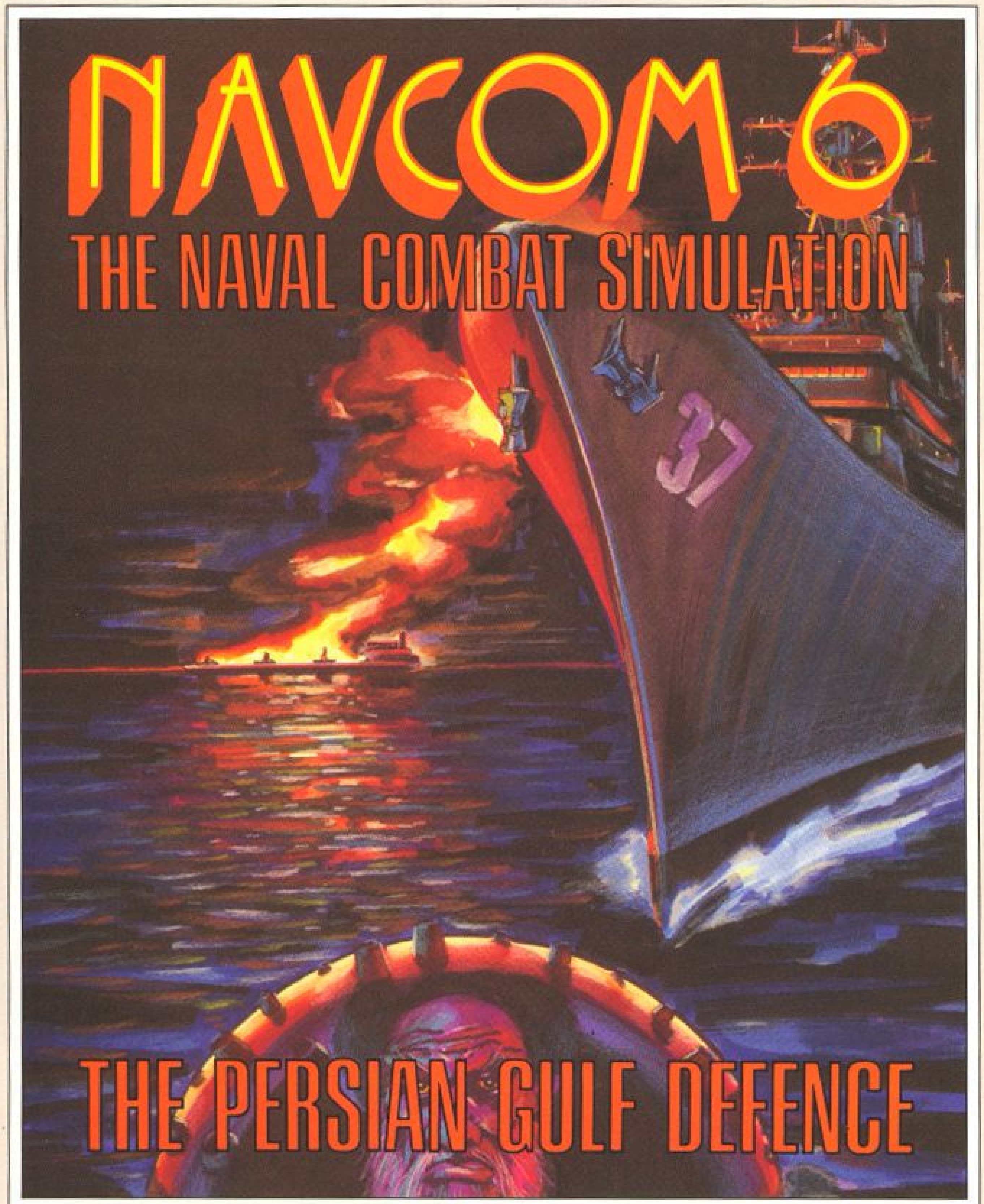
ST - Waste those baddies etc etc.



ST - Powering around the course, the leader's just ahead.

POWERDROME ● Electronic Arts

This looks likely to be E.A's first U.K. release that's been developed entirely on this side of the Atlantic. The game gives the player the chance to fly a futuristic space craft around a tortuous course of tunnels, bridges and roadways.



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WEATHER THE SEASONS

One thing we have in excess in Britain is weather! Whatever background scene you choose for a picture, if it is based on a local view you will have to make some decisions about the season and hence the weather shown. Using a computer makes this choice very much easier because, like most other aspects of computer drawing, it is simple to change your mind. This month we shall take the same landscape view that we drew in the last episode and transform it through the cycle of the seasons and changing weather patterns. How poetic!

GRAPHICS GOLDMINE...

ACE resident pixel professor, Brian Larkman, continues his superlative DIY graphics course in this month's section, packed with tips on how to get the best out of your software and onto your screen...

What's more, Brian's joined forces with the rest of the ACE team to give you a glimpse of how games graphics are developed on pages 27 (more next month!), and there's news of matters pictorial on page 23.

Don't miss the next issue! There'll also be the first instalment of Pixel Post, in which Brian answers your queries about matters graphical. If you've got a pictorial problem, drop Brian a line c/o Pixel Post, ACE Magazine, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ.

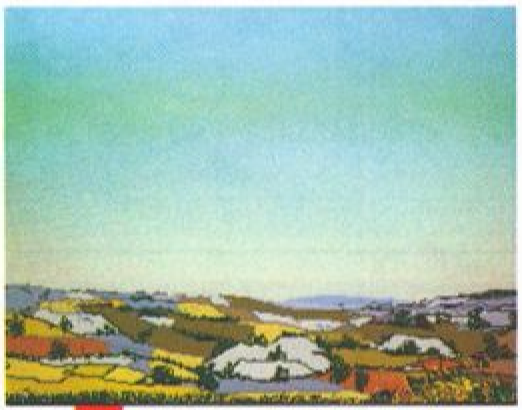
B. LARKMAN

Let us assume that you have drawn a landscape picture with a far view similar to that used in ACE 11 (If not, go and do that bit now – don't worry about the foreground, it's not used.). If possible you need to have a few colours spare in your palette, so work in the mode that uses the most colours. If your final picture is anything like our original it will have some foreground trees and bushes that are in the way. Sensible artists will still have a separate file with just the background on it. Load it up.

SUMMER LANDSCAPE

Picture 1 – Summer Landscape – shows a view with the distant countryside cut from the original as a brush/window, scaled to fit and positioned in the lower quarter of the frame with lots of sky showing. The sky is where the weather happens – in case you hadn't noticed – and for a hazy British summer it is shaded from pale blue down to very pale yellow. If you have few colours to choose from, just use the palest blue you have. If you only have the two – yellow and blue – try an optical mix of the two in five stages: pale blue in a band across the top of the sky, pale blue with a little yellow, yellow and blue mixed evenly, yellow with a little pale blue, then a final band at the bottom of the sky of just yellow. You will need to experiment with the pattern used in each of the mixes and the width of each of the bands. The effect is actually better on cheap monitors and T.V.s!

To exaggerate the summer effect you will need to choose bright, sunny colours for the landscape. If you have RGB sliders, increase the red one notch or decrease the blue. The fields should be pale greens – some of them olive green if you have it – and the trees a darker green. But wait – do not change colours by filling in with new ones, just alter the colours in the palette with the sliders (or whatever). This technique is the key to most of this month's work; the land will need very little drawing.



SUMMER SHOWERS

To be really accurate in your painting of the British landscape the one art you MUST develop is drawing clouds. It takes quite a lot of practice, but is well worth the time. Collect pictures of clouds whenever you see them in magazines etc. Have a loot at a book of the cloud studies of Constable, the famous landscape painter. They are some of the best ever painted. Look especially at the form of the light and dark regions.

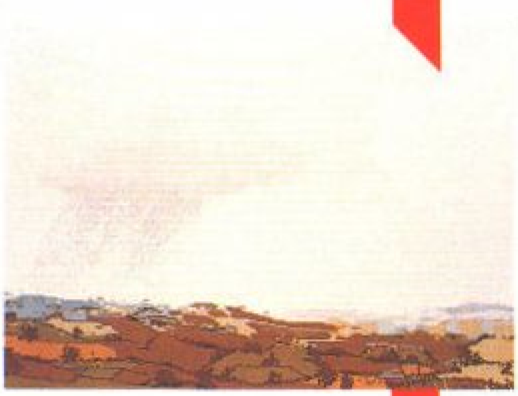
If you have difficulty drawing the shapes then trace them onto transparent plastic (see ACE 6 – Light Tracery). It is even possible to stick the plastic onto a car or house window and trace direct from nature. This works for trees, houses and almost anything you might see from your window.

The cloud on the left can be drawn with just two colours – white (or very pale grey) and mid-grey. If you have a choice the shades should be quite close, and pure white should be reserved for highlights. As usual, work on a plain background and save all the objects. Draw the outline then fill with the pale tone. Clouds are almost always darker at the bottom, so fill the lower third of the cloud area with the darker tone. Using airbrush in short curved sweeps, paint the pale tone along the edge of the cloud nearest the light source. In the same way, break up the edge between the two tones, alternating the colour sprayed until a light, ▼

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

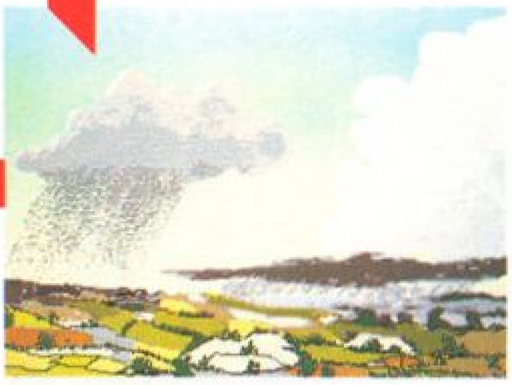
AUTUMN SHOWERS

The autumn colours are perhaps a little exaggerated in this picture, but to create a striking effect this sort of subterfuge is often required, especially if the picture is going to be printed or photographed, as these techniques can cause a washed-out look. The palette colour sliders allow the fields to be turned an earthy brown and the trees a more golden colour. It may be necessary to change individual trees to get a varied range. They sky is transformed to an autumn effect by adding to the misty greyness toward the horizon. The blurring together of land and sky at a distance is enhanced by leaving out the lowest dark storm-cloud on the right.

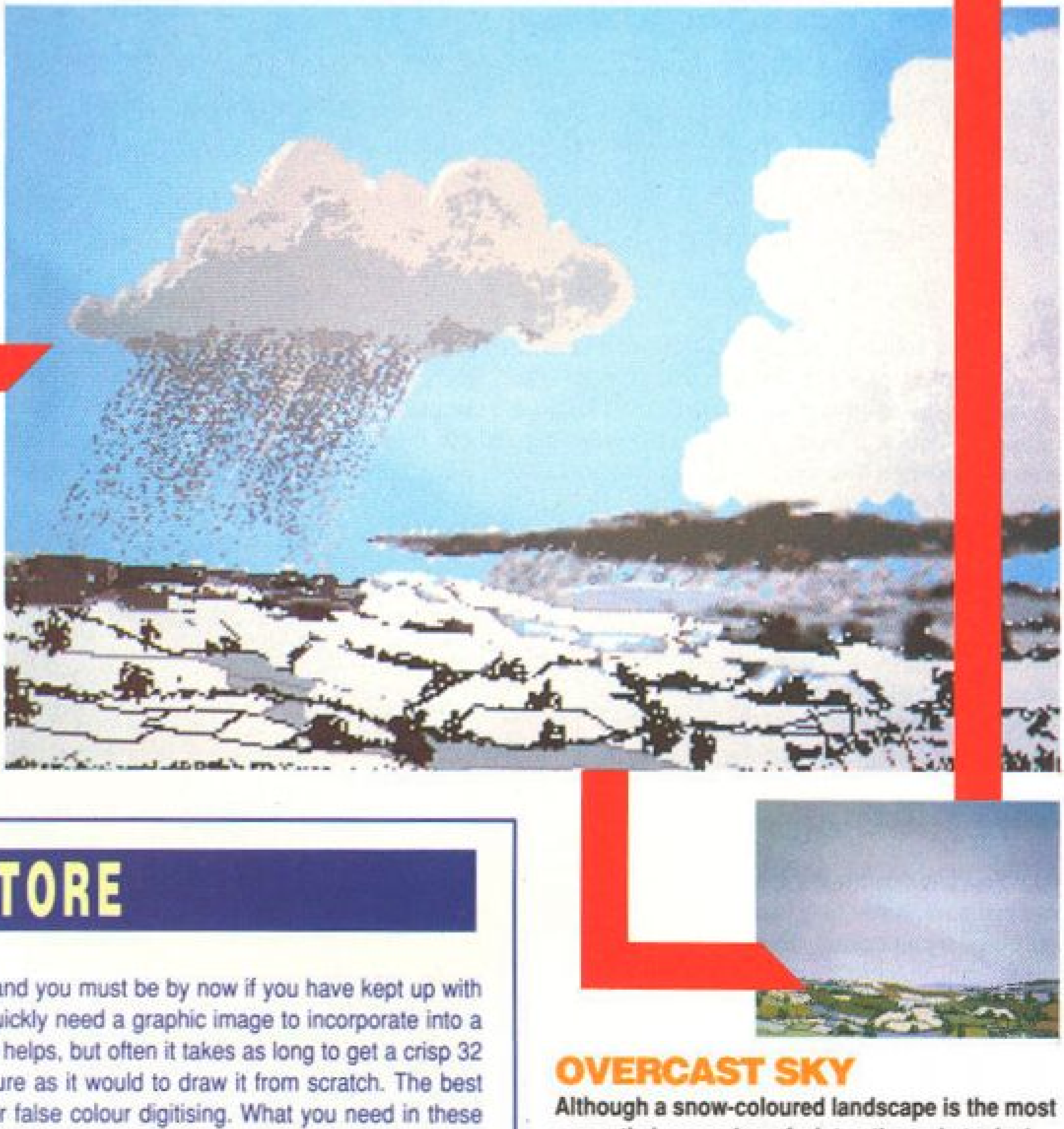


fluffy effect is achieved. Save each version and compare them, choosing the best for later use or improvement when you get better. Add the highlights last AFTER saving. Start at the top of each section of cloud and draw down, round the curve slightly into the body of the cloud at the bottom of the stroke.

The streams of rain were a series of rubber banded lines in various tones of grey. Use spray in the background colour to thin out the lower section and break up the bottom edge. The rain on the right cloud was blurred with smooth in *DPaint.*



The cloud on the right is drawn in a similar way, but the top half stretching high into the sky can be drawn almost totally in white, providing the lower part is well shaded. The lowest section can use a much darker grey if you have one. These storm clouds are often much longer and narrower (lenticular). If you are using *Deluxe Paint*, experiment with and and the greys of the default palette set as a range.



WINTER SHOWERS

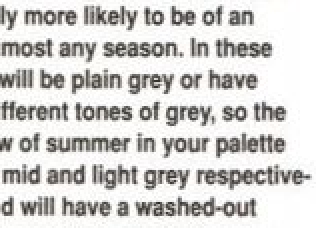
Almost the simplest effect is the impression of winter, provided there is snowfall. Using the palette colour sliders, make each field colour white and the trees and bushes a rich brown. When snow is on the ground and the temperature is low there is usually very little moisture in the air, so the sky is a deeper blue right to the horizon. This picture is exactly the same as Summer Shower except for the palette changes. In reality, the clouds should be slightly different in the winter, especially that on the left. If the large bank to the right were really full of snow it would be darker and have a slight yellow tinge.

ARTSTORE

Even if you are a very capable computer artist – and you must be by now if you have kept up with our DIY section – there will be times when you quickly need a graphic image to incorporate into a particular picture. If you have an Amiga a digitiser helps, but often it takes as long to get a crisp 32 or 16-colour image from a 4000-colour HAM picture as it would to draw it from scratch. The best any other machine can provide is monochrome or false colour digitising. What you need in these situations is clip-art.

Most of the major software companies who market graphics programs also have clip-art collections of full screen pictures and 'brushes' on disk that can be purchased to build up a library of images for later 'mix 'n' match' use. For example, Electronic Arts produce Art Parts #1 and #2, Seasons and Holidays, Art and Utilities etc, each of which contain hundreds of images. Some of these you could draw yourself in minutes, but the majority – especially on Arts Parts Vol 1 – are excellent. Electronic Arts tel: 0753 46465.

A cheaper way to build up a library of images is from the public domain. A growing number of clubs and shops are selling P.D. software, but the quality of what you get and the price you pay can vary enormously. 17 Bit Software in Leeds have a collection of approximately 140 Amiga and 140 Atari St disks, of which about 20 of each are graphics-oriented with a wide range of subject matter. They seem to have made an effort to weed out the dross and make their disks easy to access and very cheap. The ST disks, for example, come with a utility to change file type (*Degas* to *Neo* etc) and resolution. A free catalogue disk – Update – is available from P.O. Box 188, Leeds LS1 6BS, tel: 0532 420043.



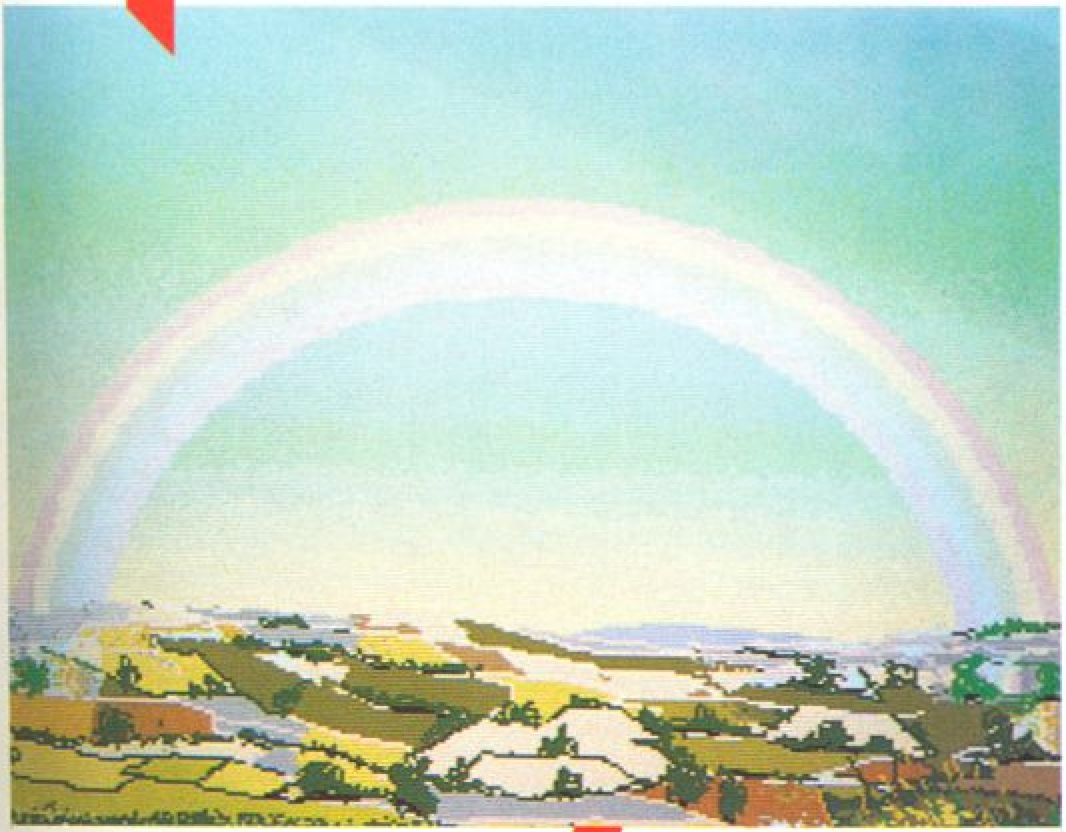
OVERCAST SKY

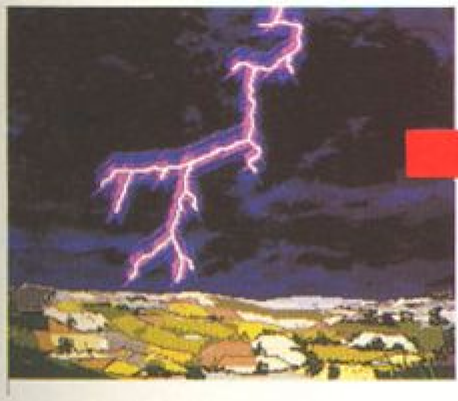
Although a snow-coloured landscape is the most romantic impression of winter, the truly typical view is unfortunately more likely to be of an overcast sky – in almost any season. In these conditions the sky will be plain grey or have waves of slightly different tones of grey, so the pale blue and yellow of summer in your palette should give way to mid and light grey respectively. Similarly, the land will have a washed-out look. Using the more sophisticated paint systems it is usually possible to alter the colour balance using Hue, Saturation and Value (H, S and V) sliders rather than R, G and B ones (see ACE 10). To get a washed-out look the saturation of each field colour is decreased (the amount of white in the colour is increased).

RAINBOW

After a summer storm, what could be more natural than the magic of a rainbow? Provided the order of colours is correct, a rainbow should be a simple feature to draw. There are one or two problems, however. Working on a background screen, position a centre mark as near the centre as possible. Using this centre, draw a series of concentric rings about 8 pixels apart, starting with red on the outside and working through orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet (Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain). The gaps between each circle should be filled with the correct colour. But what is the correct shade? An elementary mistake is to use much too saturated versions of the colours. Very pale pastel shades are most realistic, even high in the sky. If you have the facility, use the Saturation slider to lower this component of the colour. Do not worry if you cannot find the exact shades. As long as very pale red, yellow, blue and violet are there, the required illusion be be created.

If you examine a real rainbow, two features will be visible. First, the sky within the curve seems to be slightly more vivid (saturated) than that outside and, second, the rainbow will appear very much fainter against the land than the sky. The first can be simulated easily if you have enough shades of sky colours. The second is slightly more difficult. In this picture some of the landscape colours were 'protected' (using stencil) so that the rainbow only affected the sky. A few colours (selected by trial and error) were left unprotected so that a little of the rainbow's hues could be seen against the landscape. This sort of effect is very easy when using an omni-colour paint system like *DigiPaint* or *Spectrum 512* with blend selected.





LIGHTNING

The most spectacular weather effect is lightning. Computers are particularly good at simulating electrical phenomena of this kind because they show a very great contrast between light and dark areas. Also, unlike the cliched lightning fork, true lightning is very irregular, as it follows the path of least electrical resistance down to earth. In that circumstance the normally annoying 'staircasing' effect of low resolution screens is almost an advantage.

The picture of lightning here was produced using *Deluxe Paint* in Shade Mode. Similar effects can be achieved with a little more effort using any package, as long as enough colours are available.

Purple is not normally the colour produced by lightning, but it seemed appropriate for this image. The original range of sky colours (pale blue/pale yellow) was changed to pale/deep purple. Using a large, irregular brush in the shade mode the sky was jumbled, first with lighter shading (left button) then darker (right button). With other systems the sky could be left one colour.

The lightning bolt was drawn separately, using a photograph as a guide to the degree of zig-zag (trace one if you like). Using left button shading (lighter), the purple glow was drawn on in the appropriate place. If shading is not available, use exclude colours or some other method to change the colour of the 'bolt' and paint on the glow, if possible using a paler tone nearest the actual bolt. Finally, the bright white bolt of forked lightning was positioned at the centre of its 'glow'. A finishing touch can be added by darkening the edges of the visible landscape.

● GRAPHIC ACCOUNTS

EUROPEANS *ARE* TO BE TRUSTED!

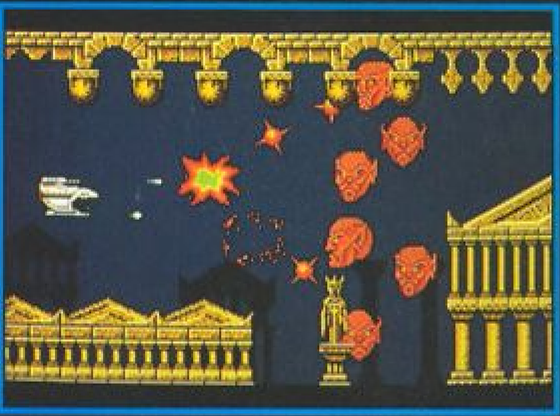
Further to our comment about Electronic Arts policy regarding protection (or the lack of it) on their productivity software, especially the *Deluxe* series, it now seems that Europeans are to be trusted after all. As of now, all PAL versions of E.A. productivity software will be available unprotected, making transfer to hard disk and general usability much easier. Existing owners can upgrade for between £5 and £15, depending on the product. Phone E.A. Customer Service for details, on 0753 46465.

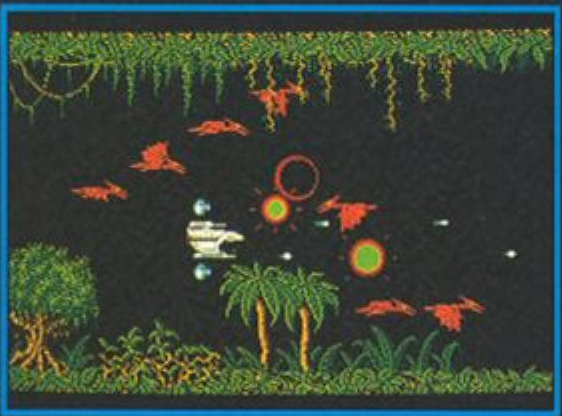
Speaking of Electronic Arts, there is now a PAL version of *Deluxe Video 1.2* available – and it is unprotected. *Deluxe Video* has always had its limitations (maximum of 16 colours) , but it is still the most versatile desktop video system available for the Amiga. Now you can use it in that ugly black space at the bottom of your monitor and produce FULL screen video animations with sound, music and special effects by the score. (DELUXE VIDEO 1.2 PAL Electronic Arts £69.95)

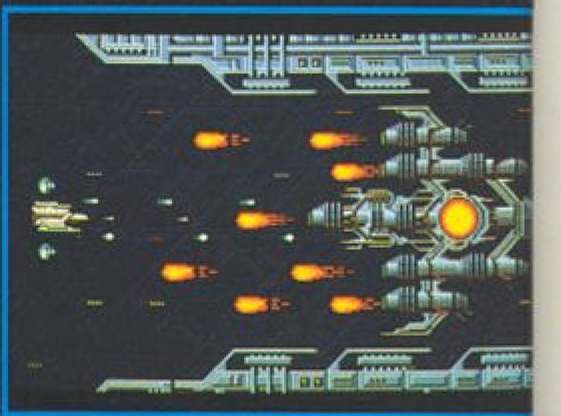
Can anyone produce a straightforward, non-HAM paint program for the Amiga to rival *Deluxe Paint II*? Well PAR (Professional Automation Resources inc.) of Vancouver think that the latest version of Express Paint can do just that. amongst its numerous abilities are almost DTP text handling – justification and flood filling of text, even of WP files – Postscript laster support, multiple levels of undo' ExtraHalfBright colours and huge canvas size. Taste and try before you buy! EXPRESS PAINT 2 (P.A.R./Amiga Centre Scotland £58)

DigiView from NewTec was the first and best HAM digitiser for the Amiga – and it looks like holding onto the crown with the latest upgrade of the software, *DigiView 3*. New facilities include normal or severe overscan, 64-colour extra-halfbright mode support, line art mode and a much better setup menu. The hardware remains the same, requiring a special adapter for Amiga 500 and 2000 use. DIGIVIEW 3 (NewTec/ Amiga Centre Scotland £165)

Anyone who has used Dr. Eric Graham's *Sculpt3D* or *Animate 3D* will realise howwondeRful this software is and how unlikely it is that it should ever need an upgrade (what, me biased? – never!). Nevertheless, an upgrade (version 1.216 is now available, to registered owners ONLY, from Amiga Centre Scotland, price £4.







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PIXEL PROFIT!

GRAPHICS

A picture tells a thousand words. It can also sell a few thousand games. This month and next month we'll be looking at graphics and visual games design – two areas of increasing importance in computer software. If you want to cast your image on the silver screen, read on...

Back in the good old days, the attic programmer was a law unto himself. He not only conceived his own games, he also coded them and designed his own graphics to go with them. As much as the gameplay, sprite and background design was often the most recognisable feature of a programmer's work. Gamesters were quick to spot the satirical sprite designs of Jeff Minter (*Revenge of the Mutant Camels*, *Mama Llama*) or the character-based scrolling screens of Tony Crowther (*Potty Pigeon* and *Loco*) to name but two.

In retrospect, we can even see that the success of these pioneers was due almost as much to their skill as graphics artists as it was to their coding. Tony Crowther's *Potty Pigeon* wasn't a technically brilliant game, but boy! did it look good! Programmers made us laugh at hordes of attacking WC's, marvel at background detail, and applaud the degree to which they exploited the colour limitations of their machines. Even then, graphics – as well as game ideas – were selling games.

Nowadays the whole ball game has changed. As competition mounts, the software houses have seen the importance of graphic design in games and brought in people specifically to work on this aspect. There's a constant demand for people with pixel skills in software development. What's involved, and could you join in?

There are three basic graphic tasks involved in the production of a good game:

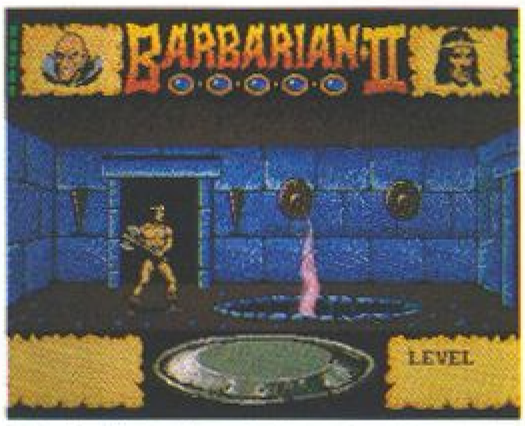
● THE LOADING SCREEN.

This single screen image can be prepared independently of the rest of the game and patched onto the finished program. Since it's the first thing the player sees, it has to be striking, make excellent use of the machine's colour capabilities, and get the most out of whatever resolution is available.

Two skills are needed here: first, the ability to form coherent, well-proportioned, well-drawn images; and second, a degree of graphic artistry in designing the type-face displays for the text (the name of the game and other information) that may appear on that first screen.

Because loading screens can be prepared independently, it's a possible task for freelance computer artists. You can use your favourite art package and save the picture as a standard screen file for the software house to integrate into the finished program. You do, however, need to know the program intimately so that you can design an image that properly conveys the excitement of the game.

● THE BACKGROUNDS.

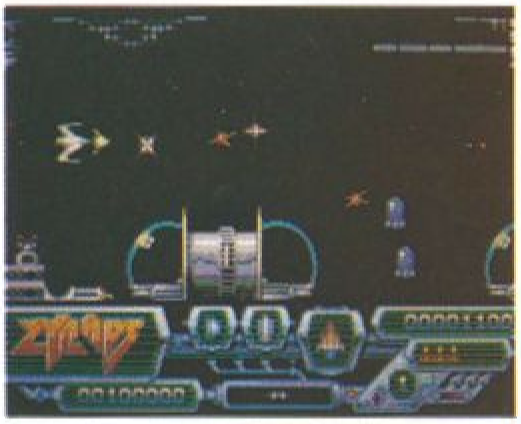


Barbarian II (Palace) - The background here is just decoration. The sprites don't interact with it, so a freelance designer could have produced it working independently.

The action of a game usually takes place against a graphic background that may consist of a single screen, a continuous scrolling display, or numerous individual 'location' designs. Compare the background display in *Barbarian*, for example, with that in Star Ray (see this issue).

Together with the design of the sprites (see below) the background is essential in maintaining the graphic quality of the game. In most cases, designing it will involve close liaison with the programmer, even down to the level of plotting individual pixels on dummy screens beforehand. The approach will vary from game to game, and particularly depends on whether the program is 'reading the screen' to determine sprite behaviour and other actions.

For example, certain shoot-em-ups treat the background as simple scenery to add atmosphere to the game. You can't crash into it, and its only role is to raise the adrenalin factor. By way of contrast, an arcade adventure may entail a sprite hopping from one platform to another, or making its way through a maze. Different game mechanics make different demands on the background artist.



Zynaps (Hewson) - The background is an integral part of this game - crashing into it costs a life - so you'd have to develop it in co-operation with the programmer.

● THE SPRITES

Designing a successful sprite isn't as easy as it may appear. You must be able to use colour efficiently to create a sense of detail that may not be allowed by the poor resolution of the display. Even more importantly, you must be able to create realistic animation sequences by designing a series of frames (as many as 16 for each sprite, sometimes even more) showing the 'in-between' positions of the various elements of the figure.

Since there may be many sprites in a game, you also have to keep a close eye on available memory. Sprites – especially large ones – can really swallow up RAM. Space is a problem with all graphics programming, but it's often the sprites that cause the most trouble and sometimes you just have to compromise.

The rise of the 16-bit machines has placed an even greater emphasis on graphic design in games. If you;re keen on putting your pixel prowess into practice, then there's no shortage of possibilities. There are two main ways of working as a graphics artist – either in a development unit or as a freelance. Several software houses commission development units to produce their games while others use freelances, and most use a mix of the two. Check out the info elsewhere on these pages.

HOW THEY WORK...

Incentive have a four-man full-time development unit with one member working solely on graphics. They also employ freelances occasionally.

'Your best chance of finding work for yourself is to send software houses demos of what you can do. Show how good you are by demonstrating a variety of techniques, so if you can animate sprites well, prove it! We do use freelances from time to time and as they often don't get too involved with the game design or programming, they can usually work to a brief from home. But it does depend on the type of game that's being produced. The pay can be good but there are lots of competent artists out there – you have to be special to earn a name for yourself'.

Ian Andrew, Incentive

U.S.Gold have no in-house development unit and contract work out title by title to various development houses:

'Anyone with the talent could do well. Any demos we receive are looked at and sometimes we'll pass them onto one of our development units, of which we have between 10 and 15 working on various projects'.

David Baxter (Development manager for Go! Capcom and Rainbow Arts)

Hewson use freelances, but only people they know are good on a particular machine...

'Anyone hoping to break into the graphics business should start by looking at the PC and 16-bit machines. Someone might do the lead version of a game on, say, the ST and another person do the conversion to the Spectrum because they know the machine inside out and know how best to give a game that visual impact. The only way into the business if you're an unknown is to spend a lot of money sending disks of your work to software houses'.

Andrew Hewson

GET A LOAD OF THAT!

What are the prospects for computer artists who want to try their hand at loading screens?

First, there is the choice between working as a freelance or as a salaried employee. Many software houses do not use freelance contributors at all – Microdeal's specialists all work in-house – while others prefer to deal with programming teams rather than individuals. Ian Mathias (Software Manager at **Virgin**) recommends that 'Artists should get together as a programming team rather than send in loading screens, audio etc individually.' About half their games are produced in-house by the Gang of Five, while the rest are commissioned from outside development teams. Ian explains that 'It has proved too much hassle in the past to try to combine different elements.'

Andrew **Hewson**, however, welcomes submissions from individuals – loading screens on their own are fine – although 'large geographical distances could be a problem when arranging schedules'. David Darling of **Codemasters** was equally encouraging. 'We are always on the lookout for good graphic artists.' No more than 1-3 samples of the author's best work should be sent in, including conventional artwork for packaging for that matter. Material sent in would not be used, but it would give them an idea as to whether an artist was worth commissioning – and not just for loading screens, either. 'Artistic talent is rarer than technical ability, and we've found it easier to train people to do sprites and animation than it is to train technical people to be creative.' So you could end up doing the graphics for the whole game, just from sending in samples loading screens. You think it never happens? That's how Neil Adamson, who's now doing the graphics for *Dizzy 2* and *Advanced Pinball Simulator* started. He sent in samples of alternative loading screens for other companies' games, and we liked them better than the originals!'

David Darling of Codemasters - 'Always on the lookout for artists.'

But what about money? David Darling again – 'We pay around £80 to £100 for a loading screen, while for a complete game it depends on the type of game – say £200 to £1000.' Andrew Hewson was less specific about loading screens. 'It could be very lucrative – if you were good.'

Freelancing is not everybody's cup of tea, however – what about a full-time job? Well, actions speak louder than words. Send in samples of your work, and wait for a reply. Codemasters are currently looking for a graphic artist to work in-house, while Virgin's Ian Mathias explains that 'it can simply be a case of your work dropping on the right person's desk at the right time – that's how I got my job!'

● SHOTS IN THE DARK

Taking a picture of the image on your monitor or TV set isn't quite as straightforward as you might think. Mastering the art of screenshooting can be a useful process, both for submitting work to software houses and making prints of your work for inclusion in a portfolio. Peter Coupe gives you some tips...

Having spend countless hours producing your on-screen masterpiece, it's a bit of a shame that it has to disappear when you pull the plug at bedtime.

Of course, if you happen to own, or can borrow, a halfway decent camera the problem is solved, You can make hard copies, in full colour, of anything you can throw up (if you'll pardon the expression) onto the screen.

HARDWARE

You'll need a 35mm single lens reflex camera. Any make will suffice, as long as it is possible to fit additional lenses, and it has shutter speeds of 1/8th of a second and longer.

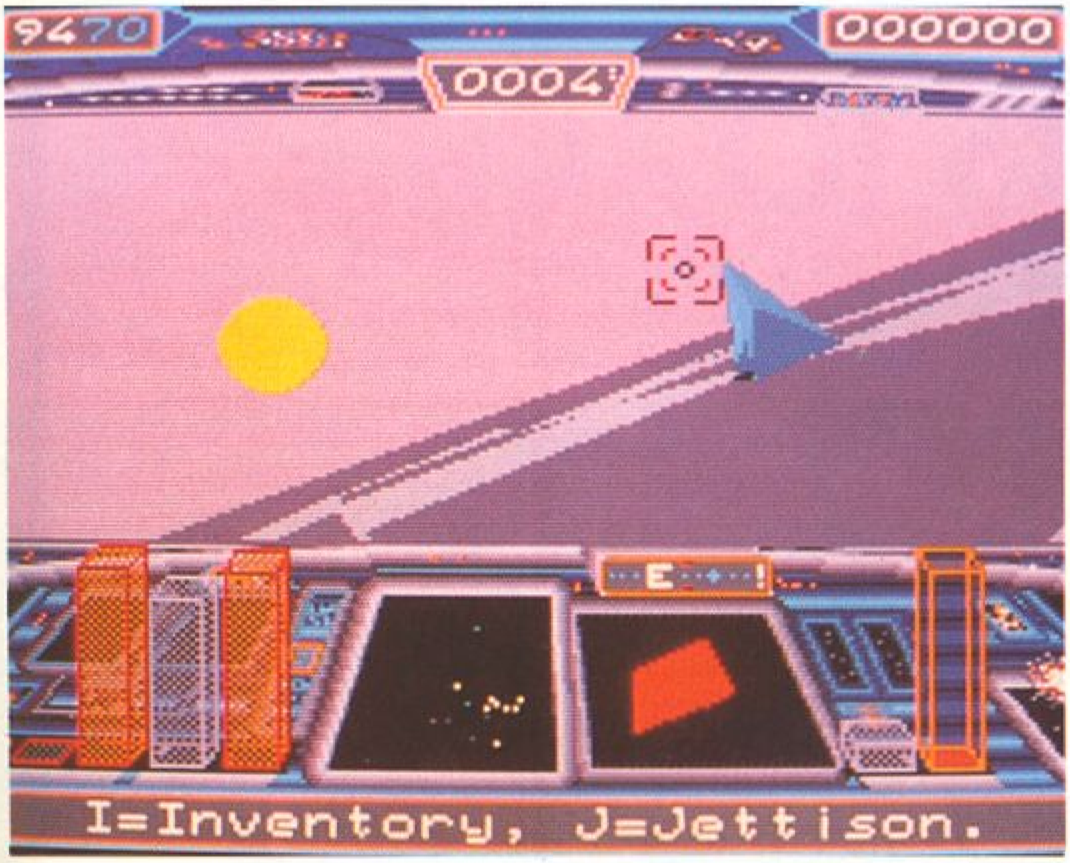
The best lens to use is a 135mm – a short telephoto in the proper photo jargon. This length of lens will flatten out some of the curves at the edges of the screen. Of course, if you have a zoom lens which has this length included (70-150 or 80-200 for example) then you can use that just as easily. If you only have access to a standard lens you could try a 2x teleconverter, which will double the lens length to about 100mm, which should at least get you in the ball park.

You will need something to support the camera, to keep it steady during the exposure. The exposure times will be too long to allow you to hand-hold the camera. A tripod is the ideal solution, but a stack of books, a table, and some blu-tack will all work more or less. The steadier the camera, the sharper the end result will be.

Shoot in the dark if at all possible. Always ensure that there are no windows or lights reflecting off the monitor screen. The only way to ensure that this problem is to overcome is to black out the room entirely or rig up an arrangement of blankets or something similar covering the monitor and cutting out incident light. Note that reflections on the screen which are too faint to detect easily with the naked eye may still show up on film.

SOFTWARE

Almost any type of film will do. Black and white or colour, prints or slides. If you are



This shot was taken at 1/4 of a second. It's perfectly OK.

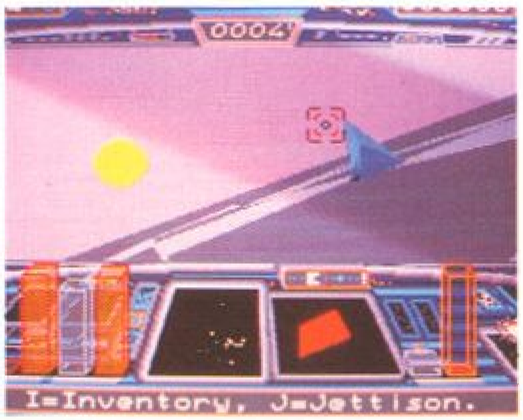
using colour film make sure you get one that is balanced for daylight. With some darker screen displays you may find that if you have a lens where the maximum aperture is f4 or above, a faster film is necessary – Ektachrome 400 slide-film, for example.

The best thing is to do a dummy run with your camera and exposure meter before buying the film. If you can get away with it, use Kodachrome 64 ISO slide film, which is about the most popular film stock in the printing and publishing industry.

For colour prints for social, domestic, and pleasure use, any colour print film should do, though I would personally recommend Kodacolor Gold 100 ISO, simply because I've used it and been happy with the results.

SHOOTING

Computer monitors can give a contrasty image, and you should lower the contrast control a little when photographing your masterpiece if the monitor/TV/allows this.



This shot was taken at 30th of a second. Notice the shadow across the screen.

The camera exposure meter will usually give an acceptable exposure reading with most displays, though note the point above about faster film speeds. When setting up, ensure that the camera is square with the screen and that the artwork fills the frame. If you have difficulty getting the proportions right and have a telephoto with a macro facility, try moving the camera right up close and using that.

Keep the shutter speed at 1/8th second or less (this is why you need a tripod). You can try 1/15th of a second if absolutely necessary but you won't always get away with it. Bracket the exposure on either side to be absolutely sure – i.e. if the meter says f4, take three shots at f3.5, f4, and f5.6. If you don't have a cable release, use the self-timer to avoid jarring the camera when you press the shutter release. Don't let the shutter speed drop below 1 second – funny things can happen to the colour balance, contrast, and exposure time of films below that speed.

When you hand in your roll of exposed film for processing, do remember to tell them what you've been up to. Photographic laboratories use machines to cut negatives into strips, and without the proper frame lines (which won't exist, because you haven't been taking 'proper photos') they will just head for the nearest strip of black and start slicing. You could end up with your best half dozen frames snipped neatly in two.

One last word: taking a picture from a computer screen will always be a shot in the dark. Results vary, but if you follow the guidelines above you should find that most of the pictures come out satisfactorily.

WHY SO SLOW?

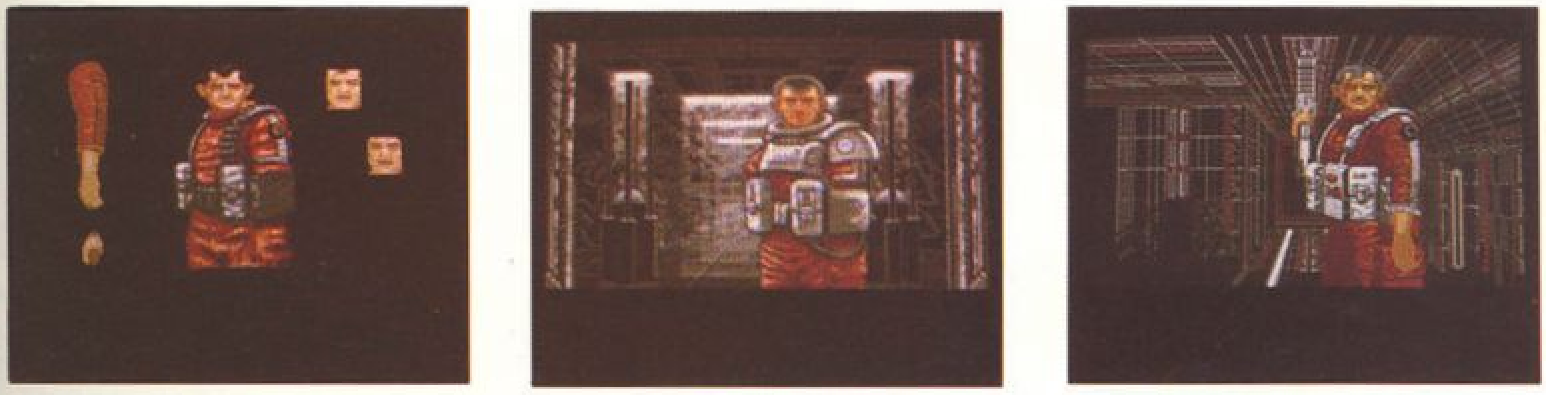
The reason for needing the slow shutter speed when taking screen shots is not due to the low light of the display, but the method in which the image on your TV set or monitor is built up.

A beam of light traverses the screen in horizontal lines, starting at the top left of the picture and travelling downwards. The phosphor fluoresces when struck by the beam and the process is repeated 50 times a second.

At faster shutter speeds, you may notice a dark band across the display. The camera has caught the beam travelling down the screen and the phosphor cells previously illuminated are now beginning to 'decay' before being 'refreshed' again by the beam on its next 'sweep' down the screen. Using a longer shutter speed ensures that the beam 'sweeps' the screen several times during the exposure, reaching the phosphor cells that a faster exposure might not catch...

NEXT MONTH: BIRTH OF AN IMAGE

We stick with graphics development next month as we look in detail at the graphics techniques and working methods of Psygnosis – a software houses whose recent 16-bit titles have won much acclaim for their graphical presentation.



Three stages in the development of the graphics displays for Psygnosis' *Obliterator.* The sprite designer has come up with figure, which is amended by common consent amongst the development team and then incorporated into the background, as developed separately by another team member. Find out about the whole process next month...

23 WAYS TO ACHIEVE SPORTING IMMORTALITY

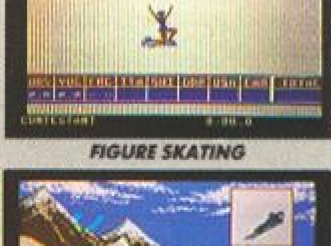
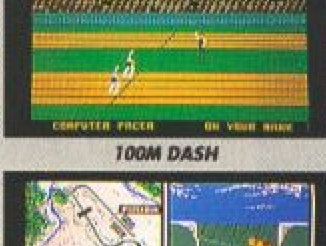
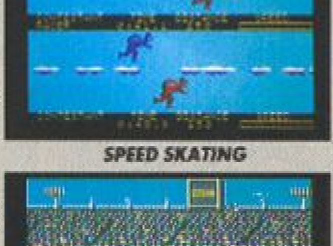


FIGURE SKATING


100M DASH


SPEED SKATING

HOT DOG

FREESTYLE RELAY (SWIMMING)

SKI JUMP

BOBSLED

TRIPLE JUMP

ROWING

JAVELIN

SHOW JUMPING

HIGH JUMP

FENCING

CYCLING

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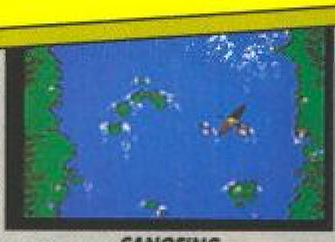
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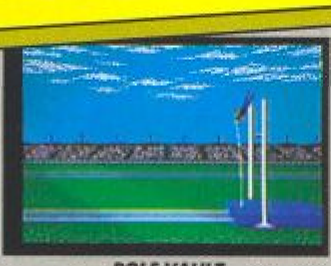
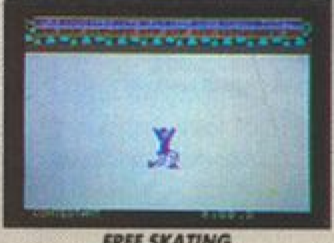
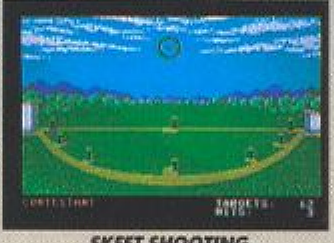

POLE VAULT

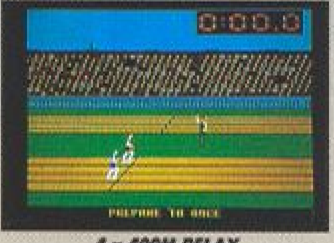
BIATHLON

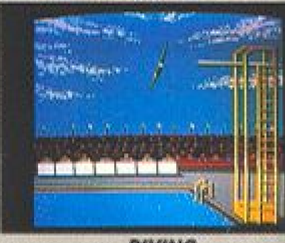
GYMNASTICS


FREE SKATING

100M FREESTYLE (SWIMMING)


SKEET SHOOTING


4 x 400M RELAY

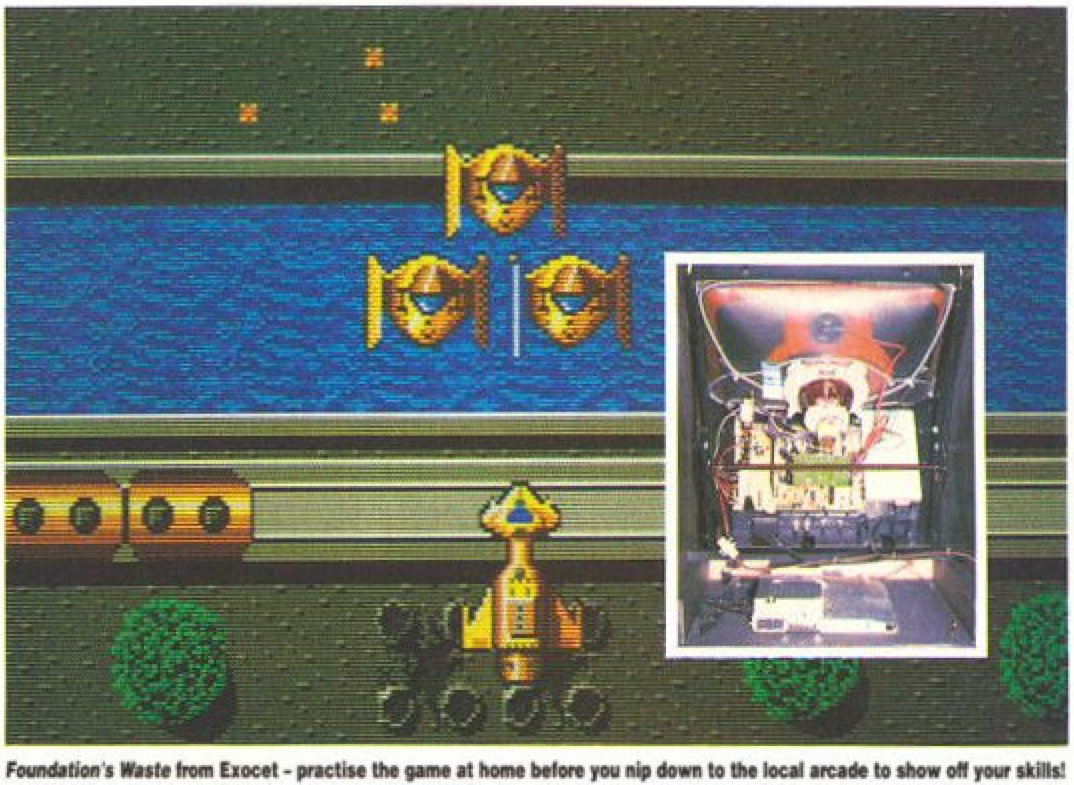

DIVING

REVOLUTION!

An arcade machine is an arcade machine is an arcade machine, right? Wrong. A Midlands coin-op company have spent the last year developing an arcade system that could revolutionise the coin-op industry.

The company are East Midlands Leisure, who (as reported in ACE issue 8) are based in South Witham, near Grantham (the home town of Margaret Thatcher) and have been involved in the gaming machine business since 1963. EML became a limited company in 1980 and continued operating gaming machines until 1985, when they switched to manufacturing them. They currently employ some eight people. In June/July 1987, EML's Development Engineer (Alan Nelson) and one of the company's directors Daryll Beecroft, got their heads to together and came up with the INTEC Video System.

What makes the Intec system so revolutionary is the fact that you never have to change the motherboard. Your standard arcade machine is a complex beast consisting of the machine hardware (the motherboard that controls the game), a monitor, control panel and coin mechanism. If you want to change the game, you either have to get hold of a whole new machine, or have an engineer change the motherboard and possibly even the control panel. Either way, it's not an easy job and can create major headaches. The IVS however, uses a standard Atari 1040 ST, minus the case and keyboard, linked to a Hantarex 21" High Definition monitor. The machine sits inside the cabinet with the disk drive facing the coin mechanism door. To change the game all the operator has to do is open the door, remove the original game, put in the new game disk and hit the mains interrupt button – the new game then loads, and there you have it!



***Foundation's Waste* from Exocet - practise the game at home before you nip down to the local arcade to show off your skills! (Inset)The guts of a standard 1040 ST sit in between two wooden shelves (the top one's been removed) and link up to a 21" High Definition monitor.**

● The EML team (left to right Bryan Beecroft, Darryl Beecroft and Alan Nelson) show off the fruits of their labours.

One of the reasons for EML choosing the ST rather than the Amiga was their belief that the Amiga's motherboard was unreliable and prone to breakdown when the units were handled roughly or exposed to severe weather conditions, and the Intec system has undergone some rigorous testing over the last nine months. The hardware was stuffed inside a deep freeze and continued to operate at minus 15 degrees centigrade. Then heat was applied to the hardware until it was too hot to touch, and still the machine kept running. They even carted a machine to the Commodore show recently, to see how the hardware would survive being dropped off kerbs etc. It passed all tests with flying colours and Alan claims they haven't had so much as a corrupted disk in the last 12 months.

The software running on the machine is virtually identical to the games you play on your own ST, but with some protection added to ensure the disk will only work on the I.V.S.. Also, the difficulty tuning is usually tweaked to make things slightly harder – soon you'll be playing tougher versions of *Thundercats*, *Backlash*, *Barbarian* (Palace) and a host of other titles in your local arcade or fish and chip shop.

As Bryan Beecroft (EML's M.D.) points out, 'the leisure centre (arcade to you and me) side of the business is now only a small part of things, the majority of the units will be sold to pubs, clubs and various establishments that have maybe one or two machines.' This certainly makes sense when you realise a unit costs £1400, including two games, and installing a new game could cost just slightly more than the games sell for in the shops (though it would cost more if the control panel needed changing, say for a driving game which required a steering wheel).

EML currently only produce the standard cabinet, but are looking at other designs which could accommodate up to four players at once – Alan was swift to point out that coin-op manufacturers are very keen on copyrighting cabinet design, however, so they've no firm plans as yet.

As to the future of the arcade games scene as a whole, Bryan's sure 'the popularity of arcade machines is on the up and up' but would not reveal how many units he hoped to sell in the first year. He did reveal, however, that EML were currently able to turn out some 10 units per week and could easily double that number if there turns out to be enough demand for the machines. Of course, only time can tell if that's going to be the case. ●

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THERE'S NO BUSINESS...

LEVEL 9
Britain's number one adventure family look as if they've come out of a game themselves. Austins swarm all over the stand, while the rest of us load up **Lancelot** and make a play for Guinevere. You can check out **Ingrid's Back** as well, but the lady's not for turning.

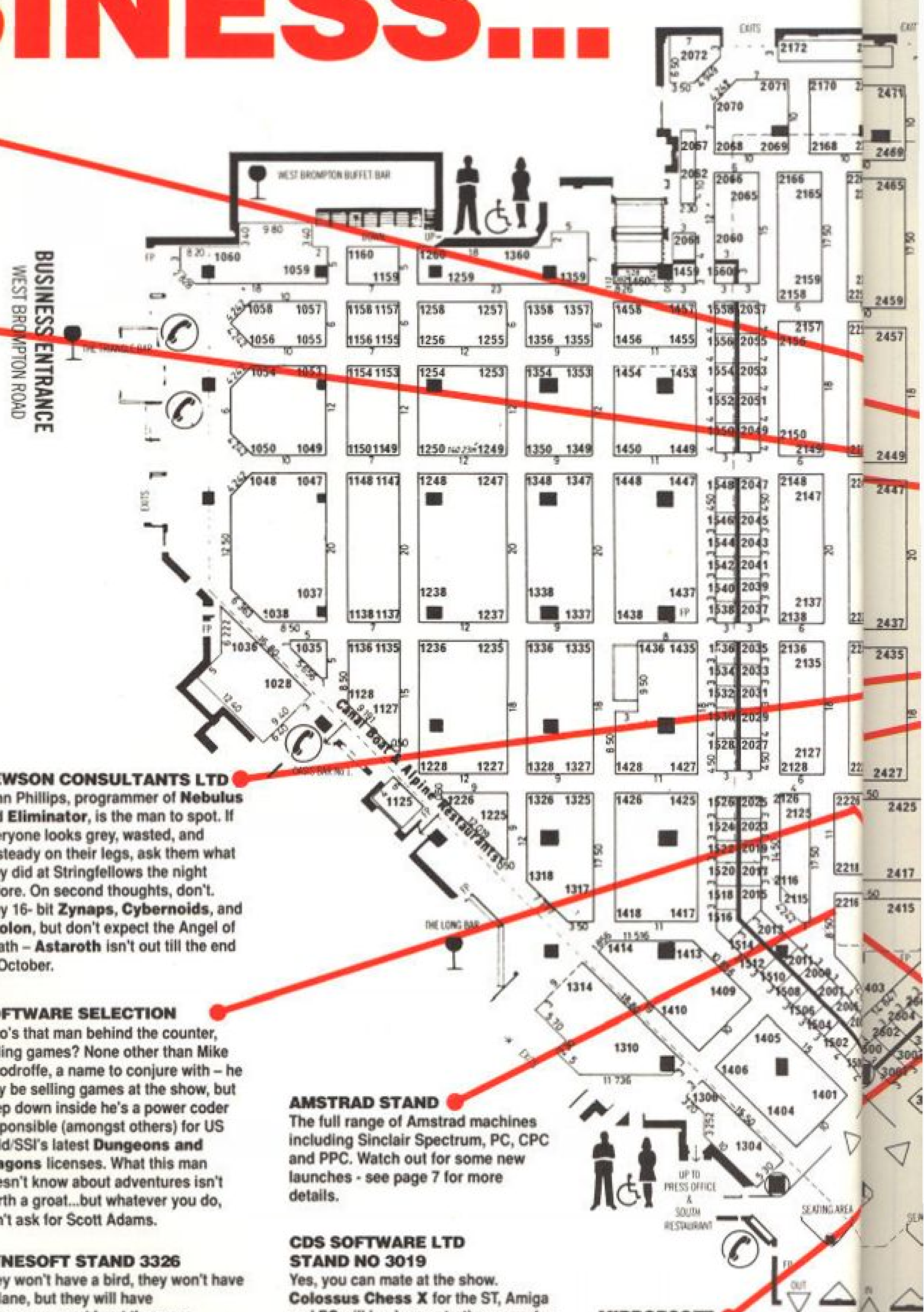
INFOGRAMES STAND
Monsieur Bouchon est le programmer of **Captain Blood**, along with Messieurs Rho and Ulrich. They'll all be there, so speak up, speak French, speak alien. Check out the new French games – for computers, of course – and sympathise with Pauline Garsden, who finds the PC Show is as pleasurable as sitting in the dentist's chair. Best of all, marvel at **Captain Blood** on the Commodore 64, Amiga, and PC.

FREE BLASTING!

If you get the shakes during the show and feel that you just have to loose off a few rounds at an invading alien species, or knock the stuffing out of a low-life street thug, here's a brief guide to the freebie arcade machines that are waiting to satisfy your every whim. Of course there'll be more on the day, but here's what's promised as we go to press...

Operation Wolf • Ocean
Guerilla Wars • Ocean
Typhoon • Ocean
Victory Road • Ocean
WEC Le Mans • Ocean
Thunderblade • US Gold
Deluxe Afterburner • Mastertronic/Virgin
Pacland • Grandslam
Pacmania • Grandslam

Ocean will have at least 15 coin-ops up and running, US Gold should have a few scorchers, and of course don't miss the Super X Simulator on the Microprose stand – 14 people come in; let's hope 14 come out...



HEWSON CONSULTANTS LTD
John Phillips, programmer of **Nebulus** and **Eliminator**, is the man to spot. If everyone looks grey, wasted, and unsteady on their legs, ask them what they did at Stringfellows the night before. On second thoughts, don't. Play 16- bit **Zynaps**, **Cybernoids**, and **Exolon**, but don't expect the Angel of Death – **Astaroth** isn't out till the end of October.

SOFTWARE SELECTION
Who's that man behind the counter, selling games? None other than Mike Woodroffe, a name to conjure with – he may be selling games at the show, but deep down inside he's a power coder responsible (amongst others) for US Gold/SSI's latest **Dungeons and Dragons** licenses. What this man doesn't know about adventures isn't worth a groat...but whatever you do, don't ask for Scott Adams.

TYNESOFT STAND 3326
They won't have a bird, they won't have a plane, but they will have Superman...or at least the game anyway. It's called **Superman's Worst Day** and you'll be able to play it in a special booth. They'll also be **Circus Games**, **Mayday** and a whole new corporate identity in evidence. Let's hope they don't have a repeat of their first time at the show when their stand kept falling over. Let's hope their software doesn't fall over either. Your message: I've got some Kryptonite here and I'm not afraid to use it.

AMSTRAD STAND
The full range of Amstrad machines including Sinclair Spectrum, PC, CPC and PPC. Watch out for some new launches - see page 7 for more details.

CDS SOFTWARE LTD
STAND NO 3019
Yes, you can mate at the show. **Colossus Chess X** for the ST, Amiga and PC will be demonstrating a number of winning positions – just resign if things look like getting too hot. If Dave Carlos is looking for his watch, he's probably waiting for Jeffrey Archer, who turned up late to a press conference last year and nearly sent Dave to the Other Side with cardiac arrest. 'It was a PR manager's nightmare', he recalls, 'but he turned up in the end...' Then the nightmare began for the rest of us...

MIRRORSOFT
Find out how the Bitmap Brothers polish the image of Image Works, Mirrorsoft's new label, with their latest game **Speed Ball**. Take a trip to the movies with Cinemaware's ***Rocket* Ranger** and **Lords of the Rising Sun**, then go underground with FTL's Amiga version of **Dungeon Master**. Pretend not to notice the titanium bolts securing the joysticks to the stands – last year they all got pinched.

MEDIAGENIC/ACTIVISION
Catch a glimpse of **Jez San** and the Argonaut team, programmers of **Afterburner** on the ST and Amiga. You may even be able to loose off a few rounds in the coin-op version.

SUPERIOR STAND
The big new release is **Pipeline** – an interstellar sulphur drilling disaster. They'll have 3 or 4 machines there and are open to requests to run any of their games you want. Spokesman Ken Campbell apparently doesn't want to be taken to the bar and plied with drinks all afternoon, but did enjoy talking to a gorgeous promotions girl last year. Breaking the ice: what's an Archimedes, and who was the girl?

COMMODORE STAND
Commodore also have a theatre and will have plenty of Amigas to play around with. So head straight for their Entertainment Software Arcade.

CENTEC ELECTRONICS STAND NO 3458
Top brands, cheap disks. Mr Turner's an expert on bulk transport – last year, he sold so much stuff he ended up turning his stall upside down, dumping what was left on top, and sending it skiing down the stairs. Make sure you give way on the last day...

DGM STAND Nintendo consoles, Nintendo games, and **Mike Tyson's Punch Out.** Sadly Mike Tyson won't be appearing to promote the game – he's too scared he'll bump into Frank Bruno. You'll also be able to find the new Electrocoin joystick here. As well as the consoles look for some full-blown Nintendo arcade machines, including the Playchoice 10. Conversation piece: can you tell me where I can buy a Sega?

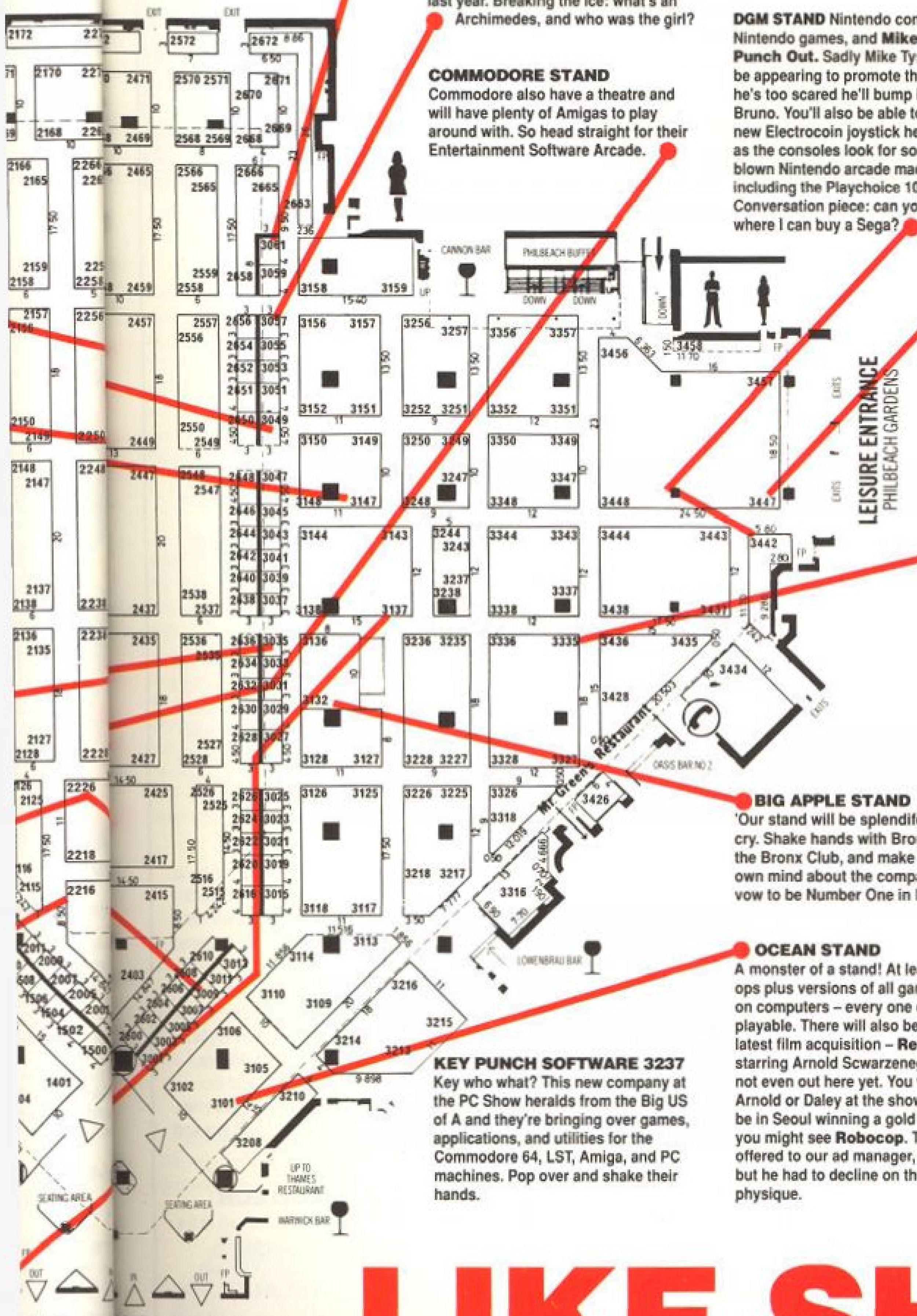
NOVAGEN STAND 3043
Three new games will be on display and playable. **Battle Island** and **X-Terminator** on the C64, and **Damocles – Mercenary** *2* on the 16-bit machines. They love the general hospitality of the show, so your bound to find plenty of smiling faces here. Talking point: where is Paul Woakes? (We bet you can't find him)

KONAMI LTD STAND NO 3347
Boy, this guy is TOUGH! Mark Smith, one of the few world pro games players, demonstrates his skills alongside new titles including **Goonies II** and **Transylvania. MSX** owners can drool over **King's Valley II.**

TELECOMSOFT
Telecomsoft are out for street cred, so carry a phonecard and be here, or be cuboid. Feast your eyes on 18 new titles from Rainbird, Firebird and Silverbird including **Soldier of Fortune**, **Exploding Fist +**, **Blazing Barrels**, **GI Hero**, **Fish**, **Starglider 2**, **Verminator** and **S.T.A.R.** Develop muscular tone with the **Mr Heli** coin-op. Do not, repeat not, wear a loud check suit. Last year, a BT staff member wearing one was propositioned while visiting the toilets. If both parties are still interested could they be at the entrance at 1.15...

MASTERTRONIC/VIRGIN
Wrist muscle meltdown time. 19 Sega machines with all the latest games – including a surprise blockbuster – plus half-a-dozen coin-ops including a **Deluxe Afterburner** and a **Deluxe Thunderblade**. When you can't stand it any more, stand and stare at new releases **Double Dragon**, **War in Middle Earth**, **Motorbike Madness**, **Raw Recruit** and **Risk**. Keep an eye out for pregnant punters – last year someone tried to smuggle a keyboard out under his jumper. If you really are expecting a baby, explain – or deliver. Conversational gambit: can you tell me where I can buy a Nintendo?

P SYGNOSIS 3338
Whatever you do, don't mention Imagine – Ian Hetherington (ex-Imagine programmer) might give birth to a megagame on the spot. Thrill to the horizontally-scrolling **Menace**, a new shoot-em-up from the Barbarian Boys; wonder at the graphics in **Chrono-Quest**, the first Psygnosis graphic adventure with icon control and textual responses. Watch Jonathan Ellis get jet-lag without moving, and check out Psyclapse. Sounds familiar? That's because it's the name of the once-fabled Imagine megagame, which now makes its way onto the market at last – not as a game, but as a label. Bruce Everiss, you were wrong.



BIG APPLE STAND
'Our stand will be splendiferous' they cry. Shake hands with Bronx Billy, join the Bronx Club, and make up your own mind about the company who vow to be Number One in Eighty-Nine.

OCEAN STAND
A monster of a stand! At least 15 coin-ops plus versions of all games running on computers – every one of them playable. There will also be news of the latest film acquisition – **Red Heat** starring Arnold Scwarzenegger, and it's not even out here yet. You won't see Arnold or Daley at the show (Daley will be in Seoul winning a gold medal), but you might see **Robocop**. The job was offered to our ad manager, Jon Beales, but he had to decline on the grounds of physique.

KEY PUNCH SOFTWARE 3237
Key who what? This new company at the PC Show heralds from the Big US of A and they're bringing over games, applications, and utilities for the Commodore 64, LST, Amiga, and PC machines. Pop over and shake their hands.

rothers
Works,
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CES
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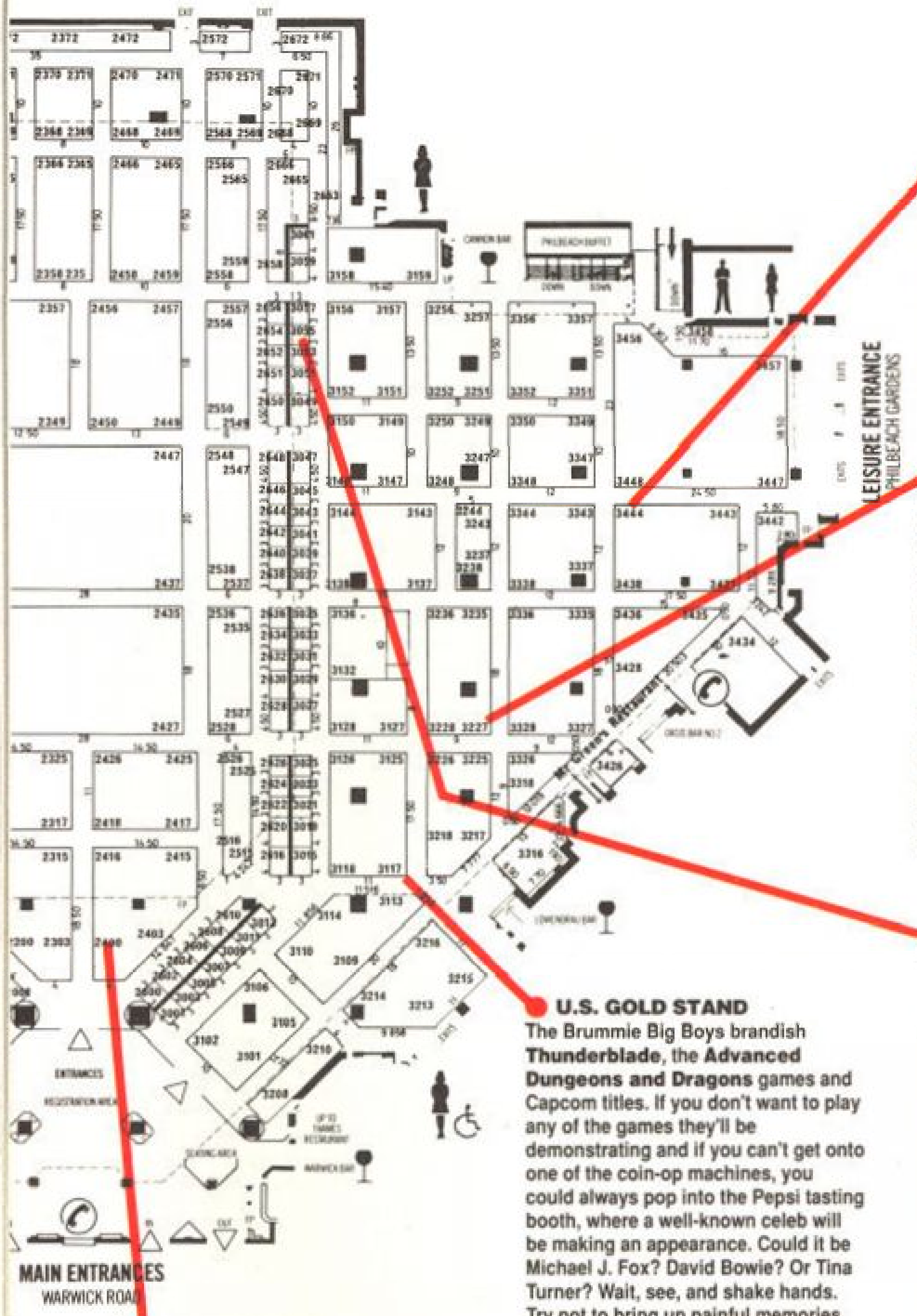
...LIKE SHOW BUSINESS!



GRANDSLAM
Coin-op and home computer versions of **Pacland** and **Pacmania** playing side by side. They'll also be showing off their new strategy game **Espionage**, and videos of **Thunderbirds** and **Running Man**, which is Arnold Schwarzenegger's latest film. Unfortunately Arnie's diary's a little full and he won't be making an appearance.

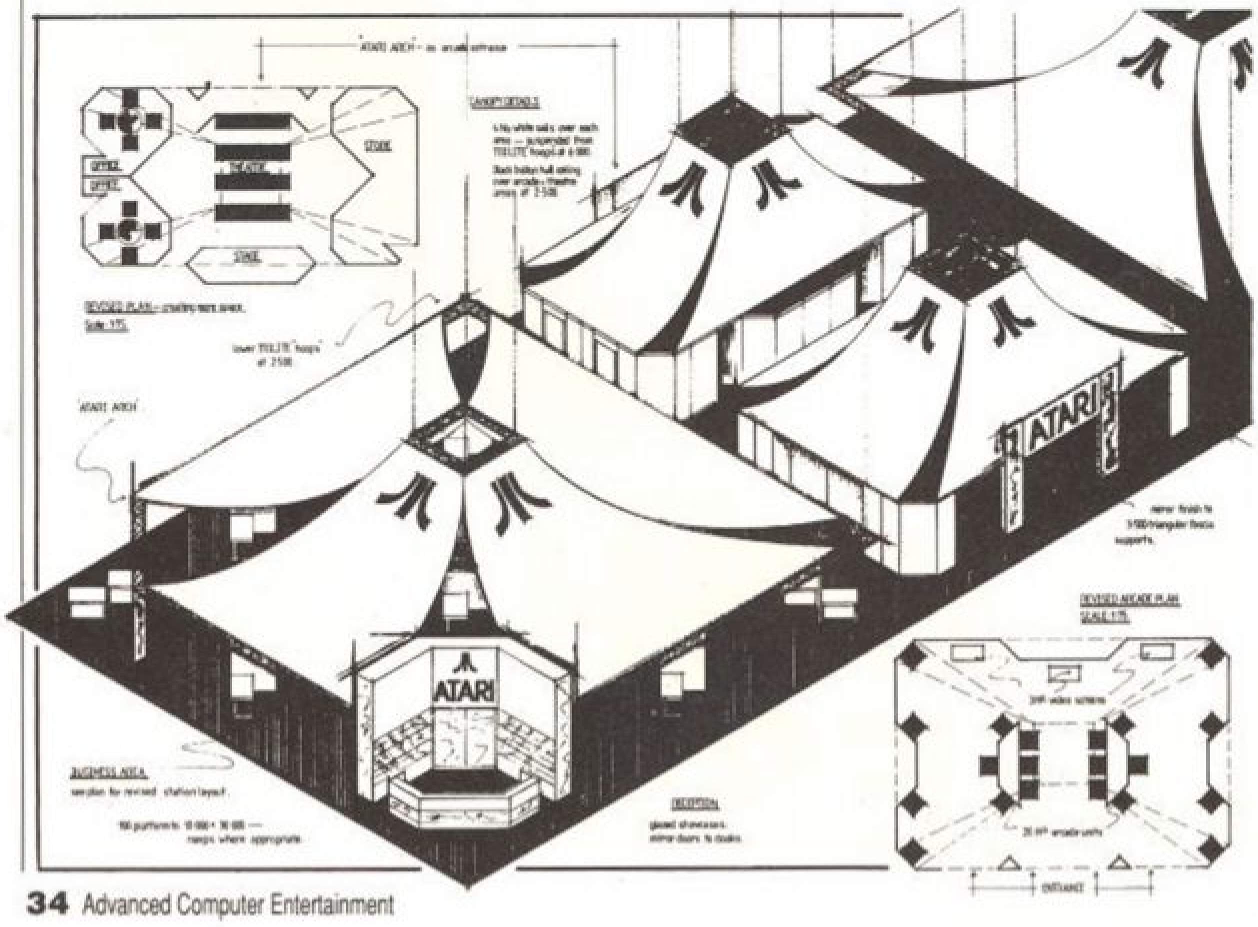
MICROPROSE STAND NOS 3227 AND 3235
Go sky-crazy in the Super-X simulator with 13 other lucky cloudhogs, then check out **Red Storm Rising** and **Ultima V** from Origin Systems. If it's getting crowded, clear the air with a blast from Cosmi's definitive SDI title, **Def Con 5**. Shake hands with Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey, but don't mention Moscow. Lord British should be around somewhere, but if he's not in evidence, check out the dungeons. If you're the man who stole Sales Manager John Tweedy's trousers last year, please return them. Preferably washed, pressed, and neatly folded.

INTERCEPTOR
Spot the Interceptor stand, spot the weirdoes. A viking from **Galdregon's Domain** and Joe Blade himself are promised – let's hope there's no pillaging or armed conflict. You'll also find Arcana on the stand – Interceptor are producing the 8-bit versions of **Powerplay**. Also up and running will be **Galdregon's Domain** – can it trash **Dungeon Master**? Plus **Around the World in 80 Days, Ringside** – a boxing simulation, and **Joe Blade 2**.

If you see Rod Cobain, spin round on one leg and giggle hysterically. When he worked for Mikro-Gen, he had two giant polystyrene interface models perched on top of the stand, revolving on turntables. One of them broke loose and span off down the stairs. It took them 9 tubes of Superglue to get it back in place. If bored: dress up as Rambo and chase Joe Blade around the hall.

U.S. GOLD STAND
The Brummie Big Boys brandish **Thunderblade**, the **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** games and Capcom titles. If you don't want to play any of the games they'll be demonstrating and if you can't get onto one of the coin-op machines, you could always pop into the Pepsi tasting booth, where a well-known celeb will be making an appearance. Could it be Michael J. Fox? David Bowie? Or Tina Turner? Wait, see, and shake hands. Try not to bring up painful memories by chanting US Gold Rule outside the stand – last year they spent a month painting the motto on a 200ft banner...which was so heavy that it ended up in the bin. Essential accessories: a bottle of Coca Cola.

ATARI STAND
ST owners will find plenty of their machines in evidence here in the arcade. The whole stand is called the Atari World and features a theatre as well.



HIDING OUT

ACTIVISION/ MEDIAGENIC

Yes, that stand is rather small isn't it? All the action is taking place at Inn on The Park. It's the limo trick again. This time, make sure you get the right person and use the right identification sequence.

It starts like this:

YOU: Are you from Activision?

THEM: No, I'm from Mediagenic.

Then make a wild rush for the limo and squeeze onto the back seat. Light large cigar and wait...

DOMARK

At the Ramada Hotel. If you're a programmer, drop by – it's just over the road.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Stand outside and look official. Look out for someone else looking official. Walk up to them and ask for a light. Then ask for a ride in the limo to the secret EA campaign headquarters. If you get the wrong person, run. If you're the wrong person, run faster.

GREMLIN

Gremlin aren't going to be at the show but they should have their big launch the Federation of Free Traders on the streets about then (see news pages for more on that). Also on the streets from them will be Night Raider, Mickey Mouse, Ultimate Golf and four compilations - Mega Games 1, Space Ace, Flight Ace and Action ST.

MARTECH

Holing up with Domark at the Ramada.

PALACE

Also shacked up, would you believe it, at the Ramada. This place must be a show in its own right. Unfortunately, only big-wigs and coders are invited. Ah well...

PCW SHOWS 78-87

David Tebbutt, previously editor of PCW magazine and long connected with the PC Show, casts his eye back over ten years of summer micro madness.

1978

THE WEST CENTRE HOTEL

Comart showed off the North Star, and CCS were busy hiring PETs, Apple II, Nascom 1, RML 380Z, SOL 20, TRS-80, Altair, KIM 1. Veterans included: Computer Bookshops, who've been an exhibitor ever since and Newbear - now Kuma.

1979

THE WEST CENTRE HOTEL

What, no games? Stock control on the PET causes a sensation and Compelec launched a 1mb, 64k, VDU printer system. Ithaca announced its DPS1 IEEE S100 bus mainframe computer (!) and on a more mundane note, Tandy showed the TRS-80 Model II. There weren't really such things as 'launches' in those days. Machines and software seemed to seep onto the market...

1980

THE CUNARD INTERNATIONAL (NOW CALLED THE NOVOTEL)

The new decade opens with a dull show, but Spectrum and Amstrad owners can give thanks for the Z80, first seen this year. Apple pulled out all the stops and gave us the Apple III.

1981

THE CUNARD INTERNATIONAL

The big micro boom is getting underway, and for the first time the show was split into two sections – upstairs for serious users, downstairs for fun and hobbyists. Outside, punters groaned in agony at the end of a 1/4 mile queue – this despite the organisers having allowed for twice the previous attendance (they got 16500 visitors). You could check out the prototype BBC micro, Atari 400/800, the Osborne 1 portable (well, luggable) CP/M computer, and the RML 480Z. However, the most significant event happened the day after the show – IBM announced its PC machine.

1982

BARBICAN (CONVERTED CAR PARK)

This year, the business/general split became firmly established and the show took an astonishing 53000 visitors, making it the largest in the world at the time, beating the West Coast Faire in San Francisco. This was the age of the hardware manufacturer – the Camputers Lynx was shown, along with the Forth-based Jupiter Ace. Where are they now?

1983

THE BARBICAN

Spot the Lambhorginis outside – Imagine were there and the games world was going crazy. So were Imagine – they didn't last much longer. Sir Clive announced another of his low-cost mad-cap ideas, the Microdrive. QL owners have been cursing him ever since. Llamasoft celebrated the high-point of the *Age of the Attic Programmer* with Jeff Minter's *Hover Bovver*. It's still selling on budget!

1984

OLYMPIA 2

Acorn ABC business range launched – they should have stuck to BBCs. Amstrad stunned everyone with their CP/M Plus disk drive – which only gave 38k for programs to run in. Most CP/M software needs at least 48K. Domark offered a £25,000 prize to the solver of Eureka. Not only that, but someone was giving away Oric Atmosses as prizes (1st prize one, 2nd prize two?). Atari made their first appearance since Tramiel took over.

The Enterprise was launched at last, though people kept calling it the Elan, the Flan, the Samurai, that machine over there, etc...First sighting of QLs for sale – the machine that everyone thought was state of the art, but turned out to be an unhappy compromise (16-bit processor, 8-bit data bus?).

1985

OLYMPIA

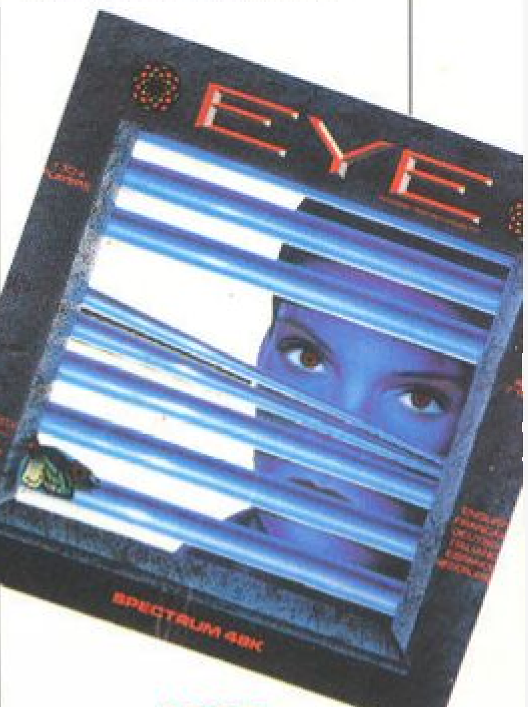
2 halls this time and the start of proper segregation. GEM appears on the Apricot f2 and F10. Philips launch their YES computer – everyone says NO.RML get everyone excited with the ultra-fast Nimbus plus Windows. Amstrad turn the word-processor market on its head with the Amstrad PCW8256 and turn 664 owners on their heads by announcing the CPC6128. No refunds, lads. Sorry. History is made behind closed doors as the Amiga is shown to a selected audience in the Metacomco hospitality suite. Meanwhile, the ST is the star of the show. Atari probably wish they could turn the clock back.

Oh yes, and a big welcome to MSX – out in force for the first time. And the last.

1986

OLYMPIA

Atari had its own hall for the first time, riding on the tremendous excitement generated by the ST. An enormous attendance of 66,000+ visitors saw the launch of the Amstrad PC1512, the BBC Master Compact, and the Spectrum 128K+2. On a quieter note, someone linked up a colour printer to an Amiga and caused a small sensation, while others linked hands and started the British Micro Federation (BMF).

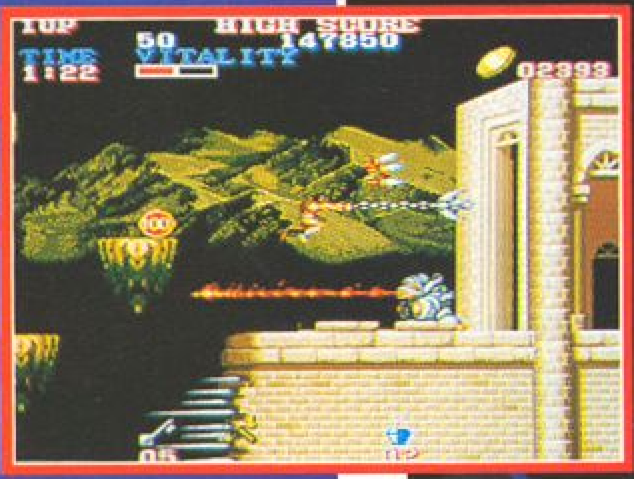


1987

OLYMPIA

A big Atari village again. Is all this expense behind the recent ST price rise? 72,000+ visitors marvelled at the Archimedes and believed rumours (untrue) that the Zarch demo was written in BASIC. Amstrad went (very slightly) upmarket with their PCW9512 and PC1640. Jeffrey Archer launched 'Not a Penny More, Not A Penny Less for Domark, and was late for the press conference. Atari announced its CD-ROM, CDAR 500, but a year later the announcement is still all we have. The earth moved for Merit when they launched the Plonker Box (a stick-on disk holder). Both the board game and the computer version of EYE were launched, and we were all told it would become the next big thing in games. It didn't. ●

Long ago when the world was a dark and evil pla
of a black and troubled sky emerged three fea
dragons. Creatures from hell, creatures of destructi
flame, fire and torment.
The world was plunged into an age of devastation
misery. Only one man has the courage, power a
to challenge these servants of Lucifer. That ma
Black Tiger. You are Black Tiger. Go forth and
battle, the restoration of civilization is in yo
hands.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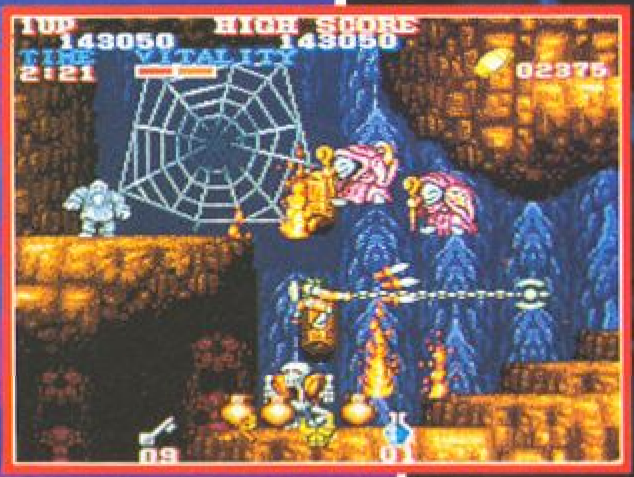
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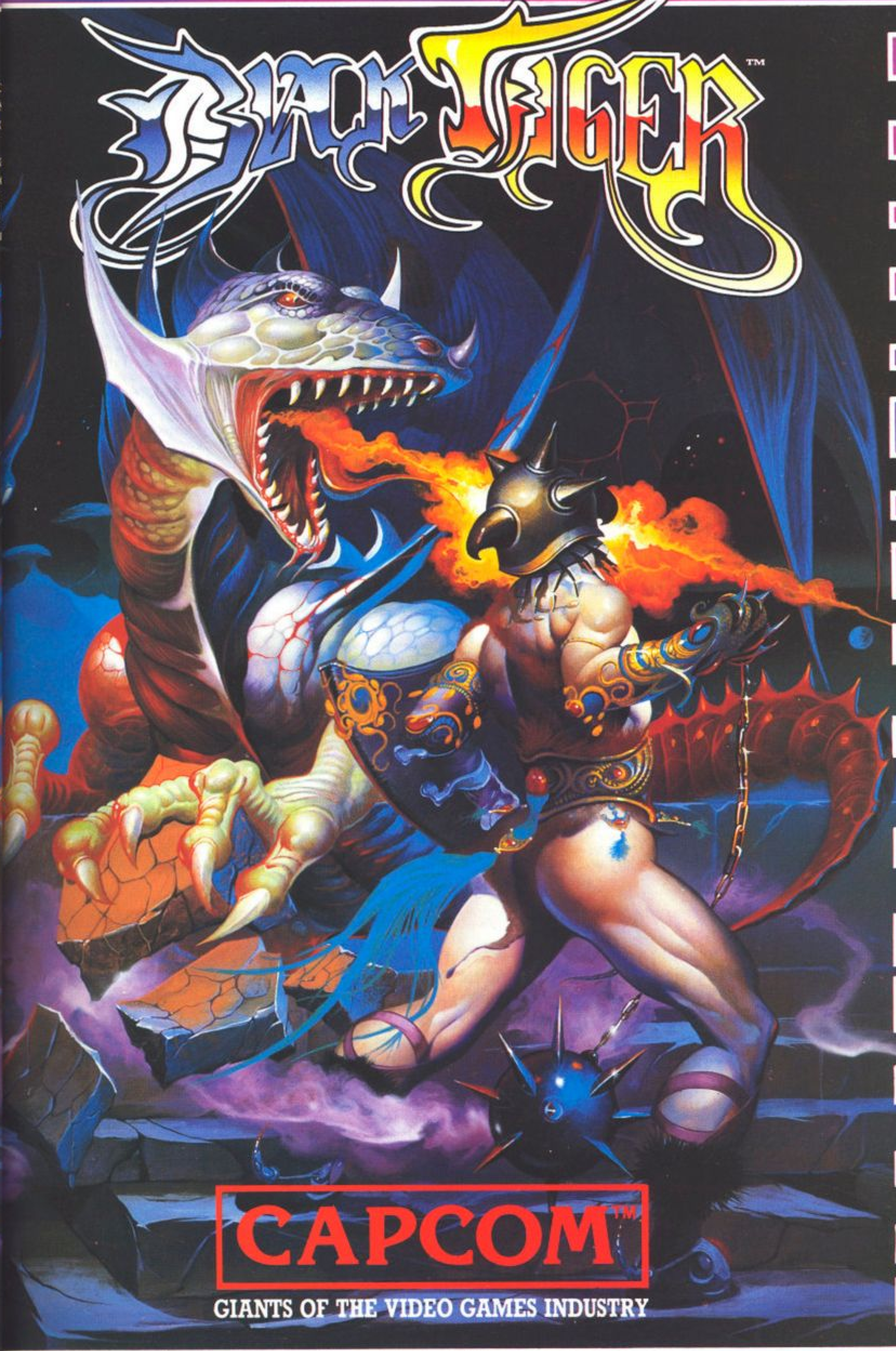
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GREAT GAMES

Can one game change the world? We name the titles that upped the ante over the last tw

TASTEFUL STUFF

In the world of combat games, the arms race finally came to a head with the extreme violence of *Renegade*. Topping even the decapitation scene in *Barbarian*, this one turned stomachs across the UK with its pummelling feature: beat your opponent's head in – literally – while he's on the floor. Heroism like that we don't need.

● THE WHOLE COMBAT GAME GENRE TAKES A SHARP DROP IN PRESTIGE.

TALK TO THE ANIMALS

Level 9 produce *Knight Orc* using a new adventure creating system that attempts to make computer-controlled characters the principal ingredient of puzzles. Before you just EXAMINEd things, now we expect to talk to them. An important milestone for Level 9 too, who were struggling against upstart rivals Magnetic Scrolls.

● FROM NOW ON, ALL ADVENTURES MUST SATISFY THE PLAYER'S URGE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS HE/SHE MEETS.

SHIFTING UP

In its 8-bit incarnations, *Out Run* was a true landmark game. Selling in unprecedentedly large volumes, its mediocre gameplay underlined an important point about 8-bit coin-op conversions as a whole: that they sell chiefly on the strength of the original. The ST version's vastly higher quality on the other hand showed just why the 16-bit revolution's moving so fast.

● 8-BIT MACHINES LOSE GROUND AS COIN-OP CONVERSION HOSTS, AND 16-BIT MACHINES ADVANCE ACCORDINGLY.

UNAV-OID-ABLE DEATHS

Re-hashing ancient gamestyles and blending them together may not earn many awards for originality, but in the case of Oids it certainly made for landmark playability. Like *Zarch/Virus*, the game showed just how much we've all forgotten about what gameplay's really all about.

● TOOK MODERN SCROLLING SHOOT-EM-UPS DOWN A PEG OR TWO FOR BEING SET IN THEIR WAYS AND 'SAMEY'.

NOBLE EFFORT

A lot of games promise arcade-quality graphics and sound, but *Xenon* delivered. And no wonder: designed for Mastertronic's Amiga-based Arcadia coin-op machines, the Bitmap Brothers' epic vertical scroller was the first ever game to hit both the home and arcade markets on the same hardware.

● SUDDENLY, SHOOT-EM-UP GRAPHICS HAVE TO BE THAT MUCH BETTER TO CUT THE MUSTARD.

BLOOD BOILING!

You might think that stunning wireframe landscapes, beautifully animated alien characters and extensive icon-driven interaction would make a game a milestone in its own right, but *Captain Blood's* milestone status comes from another achievement altogether. Along with the less impressive *Star Trek*, this French wonder topped the all-machine software charts in its ST version – and that's a first!.

● THE 16-BIT MACHINES GAIN A LITTLE MORE GROUND.

ROYAL DEFENCE

At heart a very simple strategy game, ST *Defender of the Crown* presented just enough gameplay to carry its enormous load of cosmetic extras. It also showed how mentally untaxing a game can be and still succeed, but that's another matter entirely.

● FINAL PROOF THAT WARGAMES/STRATEGY CAN REALLY TAKE OFF – IF THEY'RE ACCESSIBLE AND WELL-PRESENTED.

DOWN IN THE DUNGEONS

Where earlier role-playing games had depended on complexity, large manuals and ornate lettering styles to entertain the converted, *Dungeon Master* bulldozed its way clean into the mainstream. With true-perspective graphics, animated adversaries and a truly workable icon-driven control system, the game set a standard nobody in the field can afford to ignore.

● ALL PRE-EXISTING DUNGEON-STYLE GAMES FORM AN ORDERLY QUEUE AT THE NEAREST DUSTBIN.

MANTA MAYHEM

Realtime's *Carrier Command* wowed all and sundry when it came out, and small wonder. The game managed a blend of strategy, action and graphic excellence that few other 3D games even came close to. Never before had the wargaming pill been so cleverly sugared!

● EXISTING ACTION GAMES LOOK FLIMSIER, AND WARGAMES CLUMSIER.

HORNET'S NEST

With *Interceptor*, Bob Dinnerman set a standard yet to be equalled. The game's solid 3D graphics moved well and looked real – a very rare thing indeed – but the gameplay was the big surprise. Combat managed to be fun and easy to get into without losing the crucial believability that a good simulator delivers.

● ALL OTHER COMBAT SIMULATORS PALE CONSIDERABLY.

GUNG HO!

With the help of its custom joystick adaptor, *Leatherneck* offered ST and Amiga owners simultaneous four-player action. There's some hope that the adaptor will become an industry standard, – already ST *Gauntlet II* works with it – so the game may turn out to be a milestone in more ways than one.

● THREE-PLAYER OPTIONS LOSE THEIR NOVELTY VALUE, WHILE TWO-PLAYER GAMES START LOOKING DISTINCTLY PUNY.

MILESTONES

twelve months

SOLID GONE
A ground-breaker in so many different ways, *Zarch* upped the stakes on visual realism quite startlingly. With the fluid movement of its patchwork landscape, the thing hardly seemed like a home computer game at all – but pundits who put the realism down to the Archimedes' enormous processing power were confounded by the ST version, *Virus*.

● ALL OTHER 3D SOFTWARE TAKES A HAMMERING FOR LACK OF TECHNICAL AMBITION.

ON MANOEUVRES
Rainbird's *Universal Military Simulator* gave computer wargames a brand new 3D look which helped emphasise the effect of terrain on the course of a battle. Although display options were limited, the system reached people who'd never bought normal 2D wargames.

● FLAT-MAP WARGAMES TAKE A FEW HITS ON THE 16-BIT MACHINES FOR THEIR DISPLAY AND FLEXIBILITY SHORTCOMINGS.

GNAWED AND BURR'D
Infocom pushed forward the boundaries of interactive fiction with Nord and *Bert Couldn't Make Head or Tail of It*, a set of eight mini-adventures whose puzzles revolved around different forms of wordplay. The lack of conventional problems and the immediacy of the gameplay gave *Nord and Bert* a far wider appeal than most adventures can manage.

● STANDARD LOCKED-DOOR ADVENTURES LOSE A POINT OR TWO FOR BEING MORE OBVIOUSLY FORMULARISED.

BEYOND TEXT
Infocom finally take the plunge and introduce an element of role-playing with *Beyond Zork*, plus on-screen mapping. The giants are moving with the times...

● ANOTHER LARGE NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURE.

ICONIC CREATION
Mindscape/Icom's *Shadowgate* shows that icon-driven Mac adventures can look good on other formats. Suddenly everyone starts experimenting with adventure user interfaces – icons, on-screen maps, menu-driven command structures and so on.

● STANDARD TEXT-BELOW, PICTURES-ON-TOP ADVENTURE INTERFACES BEGIN TO LOOK A LITTLE OLD-HAT.

FOUR SQUARE
In a year of technical milestones, *Tetris* was stunning for its extreme simplicity. A full price game you could practically write in Basic – who'd have thought it? The abstract oddity was also noteworthy as the first Soviet game to reach the West: could 1989 be the year of glasnostware?

● MOST MAINSTREAM GAMES LOSE A POINT OR TWO FOR LACK OF ORIGINALITY.

THREE'S COMPANY
Activision broke new ground with C64 *Rampage*, bringing would-be monsters the chance for three-player simultaneous mayhem. Their dedication to trio action surfaced again with ST *Super Sprint*, putting more drivers on the grid than any previous home game.

● SIMULTANEOUS TWO-PLAYER GAMES TAKE A BEATING FOR THEIR LACK OF INTERACTIVE VARIETY.

RIGGED!
Driller's 3D arcade adventure system created a solid, real game world with graphics the like of which the 8-bit machines had never seen before. When a Spectrum or C64 can pack this big a game in, it really does put standard playing fare in the shade.

● PUTS ROCK IN SOLID 3D.

IVORY TOWERS
Around *Nebulus's* astonishing rotary scroll, programmer John Phillips wove a remarkably clever version of that old standard, the platform game. Small-scale bits of originality look a good deal less impressive.

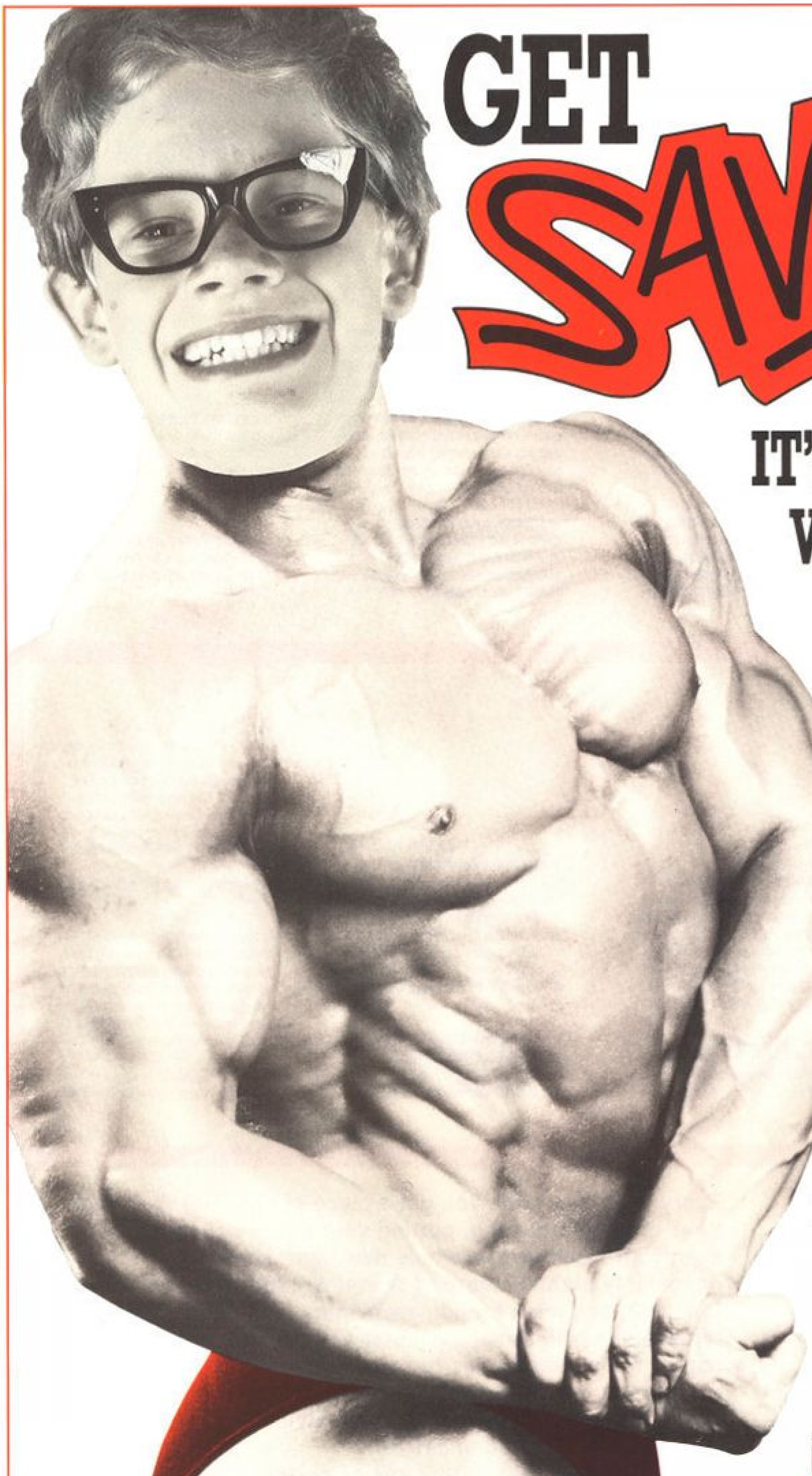
● 8-BIT GAMES KICKED OUT OF THE RUT.

COLOUR QUEST
Legend of the Sword – a traditional adventure scenario, but more colourful than anything to date as Firebird plaster the screen with menus, compasses, maps, characters, and location images.

● TEXT-ONLY ADVENTURES STAND ASIDE, PLEASE.

Every once in a while you get a piece of software that redefines computer gaming, putting your entire collection or even your machine in a whole new light. Maybe it sets an impossibly high standard of technical refinement for others to match, or uses a brand new display technique. Maybe it rediscovers traditional gameplay values, or leaps outside conventional boundaries to provide a brand new playing experience. Maybe it just pushes a tired game formula too far, putting you off the whole game-style: bad games can be as influential as good ones!

For whatever reason, the games on these two pages were software landmarks during the last twelve months. Surprised that there are so many of them? Well it's been a busy old year, and games have been changing right across the board. What with the explosive growth of solid 3D in action games, the rising tide of interaction and innovation in adventures, and the relentless onslaught of strategic elements on the mass market, the stakes have risen a long way.



GET SAVAGE

IT'S AMAZING WHAT A REAL COMPUTER GAME CAN DO.

- HURL A VOLLEY OF AXES
- FIRE BOLTS OF LIGHTNING
- WRESTLE FEROCIOUS BEASTS
- LEAP OVER BLAZING CHASMS

FIREBIRD

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SEE US ON STAND 3447 AT THE P.C. SHOW, EARLS COURT, 14-18 SEPT.

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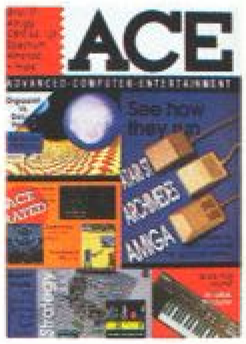
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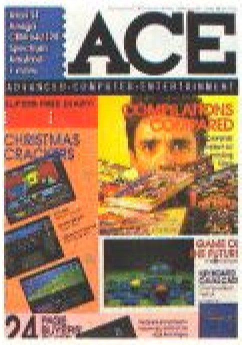
See how they run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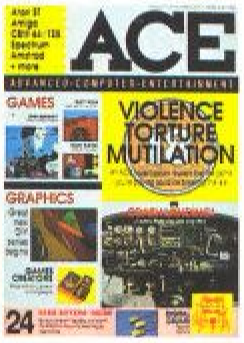
COMPILATIONS COMPARED
CHRISTMAS CRACKERS
24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ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
GAMES
VIOLENCE TORTURE MUTILATION
GRAPHICS
24

ACE
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ARCADES
GAMES
BRAINSTORM

ONE YEAR OLD

The ACE team present their definitive guide to the 100 Top Games of 1987/88, and cast their eyes back on twelve issues that rode the wave of a revolution in computer entertainment. Don't forget, if you're out there and you're playing games, you're making history. Here it is...

1 ACE is born into a world of console fever. Sega is taken up by Mastertronic and given top billing while Nintendo dozes in the hands of Mattel. *XOR* claims the title of Brainest Game of The Year and a printing mistake awards *Arkanoid*-beater *Impact* a rating of 95.

2 The issue that nearly lost Telecomsoft £1/4 million. Our cover-mounted demo of *Bubble Bobble* is discovered to be the complete game. The readers are blissfully unaware of what they're missing as gnomes struggle night and day to replace the tapes with the proper version. *Zarch* is previewed, the Germans ban *Barbarian*, and Origin Systems advertise *Ultima V* – to be released one year later. Blitter End apologises for the *Impact* rating and gives it 927....

3 *Afterburner* hits the arcades and *ECO's* pretty face gets slapped all over the Previews Pages. ACE team gets excited about what looks like being a first-rate example of original advanced computer entertainment. *Impact* finally ends up with a rating of 955. Phew!

4 Mastertronic marry a Virgin, CRL tempt the censor with *Jack the Ripper*, and 24 of ACE's pages blush pink for the first time. Saddest story of the year: Hewson's *Nebulus*, a tremendous original game, comes out and fails to sell...

5 Rumours of an Amstrad Amiga...not the first Amstrad rumours this year and certainly not the last – see this issue. *Skulldiggery* digs the grave for Nexus and *Rampage* battles *Ramparts* for supremacy. 'Any resemblance between the games is just your opinion', opines a US Gold spokesman. *Star Trek* boldly goes into the wastepaper bin and *Tetris* sends puzzle addicts into the loony bin.

6 Mattel wake up and drop Nintendo, or is it the other way round? The first prison sentence is handed out for a computer pirate and *ECO* is finally reviewed. The ACE team are disappointed by what turns out to be a first-rate example of original advanced computer graphic presentation...but no gameplay. Meanwhile *Quantum Paint* puts 4096 colours on your ST and Rod Lawton, romantic fiction writer extraordinaire, joins the magazine.

7 The ACE Card competition is launched – and it's still running, so make sure you get yours, eh? The Previews section sets a record by previewing two games, *Verminator* and *Stormtrooper*, that still haven't been launched. It doesn't look as if Stormtrooper ever will be. First shots of the Atari ABAQ game, and *Kwasimodo* re-defines the meaning of rubbish with an ACE rating of 160.

8 Atari stun gamesters with a £100 price increase...Advanced computer entertainment is set back just a teensy bit by the release of *Battleships* and, even worse, *Soko-Ban* –a nine-year-old MSX title that looks its age. *Oids* and *Dungeon Master* restore confidence, however. More screenshots of Verminator, but still no game. News of a Spectrum-compatible machine from Miles Gordon Technology, but still no computer. *Pacmania* hits the arcades – you should be able to play the conversion at this year's PC Show. *Gee-Bee Air Rally* looks fantastic, but plays poorly, and Codemasters join the 16-bit revolution.

9 The American Issue. Pete Connor travels to the States, and returns swearing he'll never go there again. *Impossible Mission* mounts the cover and ACE reveals a bared forearm from *Strip Poker 2*.

10 More Amstrad rumours – this time of a music micro, which leads to yet another ACE exclusive with the discovery of the Flare. As we tremble with excitement at the thought of all that processing power, *Charlie Chaplin* – perhaps the worst-ever license – brings us back down to earth again. Macmillan fish Piranha out of the water for the last time and CRL begins its expensive legal battle with EA – still not resolved.

11 The Flare feature reveals just what you can do with a Z80, but the awful truth seems to be that no major manufacturer wants to do it. Amiga price cuts send shivers up Atari's spine and Big Apple sends out lots of press releases. Like most apples, however, it doesn't look as if it will come down to earth till Autumn.

12 Amstrad rumour time again. This time, however, it appears almost official – a PC-compatible games machine for £299. The truth may come out on September 13th. *Giganoid* sets new levels for look-alikes. *Better Dead Than Alien* would have been better dead than released, and Psygnosis, Mirrorsoft, and Telecomsoft announce a joint label, Triad, without saying what it's going to do, or when...and The ACE team start working furiously on their anniversary issue!

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ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
DEAD CERT!

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IS THIS THE 16 BIT BREAKTHROUGH?

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FREE!

ACE
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POWER
FRUSTRATION
CORRUPTION

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GLOBAL CONFLICT

NOW...turn the page and check out the **100 Top Games of the year**, rated and re-appraised – PLUS playing tips and targets...

100 TOP GAMES

Here they are...the top games from one of the most exciting years ever in the history of computer entertainment. Check out the ratings, the playing tips, and the lasting value of the titles that set the standard by which all other games should be judged. If you think you're tough, buy them, play them, and see if you can beat them...

ADDICTABALL

Alligata

Atari ST	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 826

A scrolling *Breakout* game didn't seem like the brightest of ideas, but it added a novel twist to a flagging game style. There are lots of nice elements like jet-thrusters on the bat, an erodable back wall and teleports, that make it different from any of the other games in the field. However, it's more frustrating because if you die there are restart points you have to go back to.

VINTAGE VALUE 635

It's suffered from the masses of other clones.

TIPS

Use ammo sparingly to get you out of tight situations. Don't just let the ball bounce off the back wall – you can do more damage and speed the ball up by trying to hit it all the time. Protect the back wall at all times from fireballs and skull-blocks. Neglect them and you won't last long at all.

TARGET

Complete a level without using a teleport.

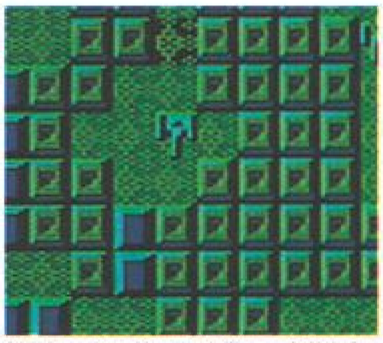
ANARCHY

Rack-It

Spectrum	£2.99cs
C64	£2.99cs
Amstrad	£2.99cs

Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 815

One of this year's few real budget crackers, this intriguing little tank-em-up hides its light under a bushel. The game format looks like simplicity itself – drive your tank round a series of mazes, destroying the weapons cannisters stored there and dodging enemy droids – but restrictions on firing often force you to tackle screens in one particular order. It's a subtly enjoyable game verging on the abstract, which manages to be both satisfying and largely non-violent.



C64 Anarchy - Your tank-like craft is being pursued by a homing droid, so don't retrace your steps.

VINTAGE VALUE 795

Still looks like great budget fare.

TIPS

The key to unlocking a large structure of cannisters isn't the structure's shape, but rather the notion of firing gaps round the edge. Often you only need one gap to unlock a large chunk of the screen.

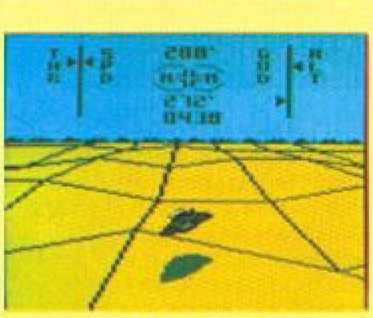
The guardians on every fifth level follow your course exactly, so try and move in loops rather than retracing your steps. That way you stand a far better chance of squeezing past them and escaping.

ATF

Digital Integration

Spectrum	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
C64	£8.95cs	£13.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£12.95dk

Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 956



This stealth fighter-bomber game was a bold move for DI, a firm better known for strict-ish simulations. They traded realism for gameplay and produced some of the best tactical action we saw all year, embedded in a very playable arcade-style game. Make up your own mission from intelligence briefings, load your Advanced Tactical Fighter with the stores of your choice and fly out over wire-frame landscapes to help your forces win the war.

VINTAGE VALUE 944

When 8-bit software's this impressive, it lasts.

TIPS

Stick with Mavericks for ground targets. Slow down to terrain-following speed as you get within 100km, line up, fire, and launch another missile as each one hits to destroy even the extra tough enemy bases before you reach them.

On higher levels, your real task is to keep your ground and sea forces in contention – note those map areas where your guys are heavily outnumbered, Mavericking any target you've already got on your computer and searching out the rest. They'll log in automatically as you approach, and a few more Mavericks should turn the tide in your favour.

If you've been shot up and are only just fast enough to stay airborne, don't put your undercarriage down until the last moment. Lowered wheels only reduce your airspeed by a tiny amount, but this can be enough to stall you.

TARGET

Win on any level without using Mavericks.

BALANCE OF POWER

Mindscape

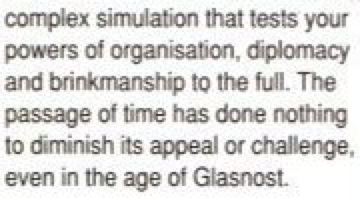
Amiga	£29.95dk
Atari ST	£29.95dk

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 950

A classic struggle between East and West for world supremacy. You can control either the USA or USSR as they try to win over countries by fair means or foul. It might start out as some economic aid to a poor third world country, escalate into military intervention and end up as a global nuclear conflict. It's a tremendously complex simulation that tests your powers of organisation, diplomacy and brinkmanship to the full. The passage of time has done nothing to diminish its appeal or challenge, even in the age of Glasnost.

VINTAGE VALUE 950

As good today as it's always been.



TIPS

Initially you'll have to play everything by ear as to what to fight hard over. Gradually you'll learn what issues the opposition will or won't back down over. There's no point being a nice guy and just defending your own sphere of influence. You've got to get out there and compete, otherwise defeat is guaranteed. Never go all the way to nuclear war yourself. Sometimes it's worth pushing the other side to the final decision to get a big climbdown. Never challenge on anything except issues you've got a good chance of winning – it will cost big points otherwise.

TARGET

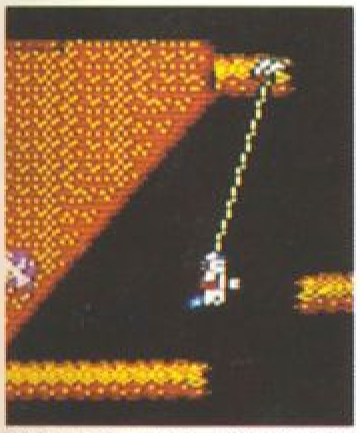
Go to DefCon 4 three time in one game – and survive.

BIONIC COMMANDOS

GO!

C64/128	£9.99cs	£11.99dk
Spectrum	£8.99cs	
Amstrad	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Atari ST		£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 10 – Original ACE Rating 838



C64 Bionic Commandos - Using your claw at full extension can get you past tricky spots.

Another coin-op conversion that works well in its home micro incarnations. The bionic man in question has extendable, grappling hook arms that allow him to swing and climb around all manner of floating platforms. He's pursued by ninjas all over the place and faces other devilish defences. As yet there aren't any clones but you can bet someone will be working on one.

VINTAGE VALUE 838

No rivals have appeared to threaten it.

TIPS

Throwing the hook can scroll the screen to reveal platforms or defences. This is frequently handy in making progress.

TARGET

Complete Level 1 without shooting anyone.

BMX SIMULATOR

Codemasters

Atari ST	£14.95dk
Amiga	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 810

Viewed from above, this BMX-em-up gives you and a friend the chance to pedal your way round seven courses in an attempt to complete the specified number of laps within the time limit. The bumps and berms all affect your bike realistically, so use them to your advantage.

VINTAGE VALUE 760

We expect a bit more from a game nowadays.

TIPS

Some levels have undocumented short-cuts!

TARGET

Complete it without falling off.

BOBSLEIGH

Digital Integration

C64/128	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Spectrum	£9.95cs	
Amstrad	£9.95cs	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 901

This winter sport simulation is still unrivalled for its realistic representation of bulleting down walls of ice in a metal tube. The C64 version was sadly not up to the standard of the others, lacking the control and feel. The long term aims were quite difficult and are still a tough prospect today.

VINTAGE VALUE 863

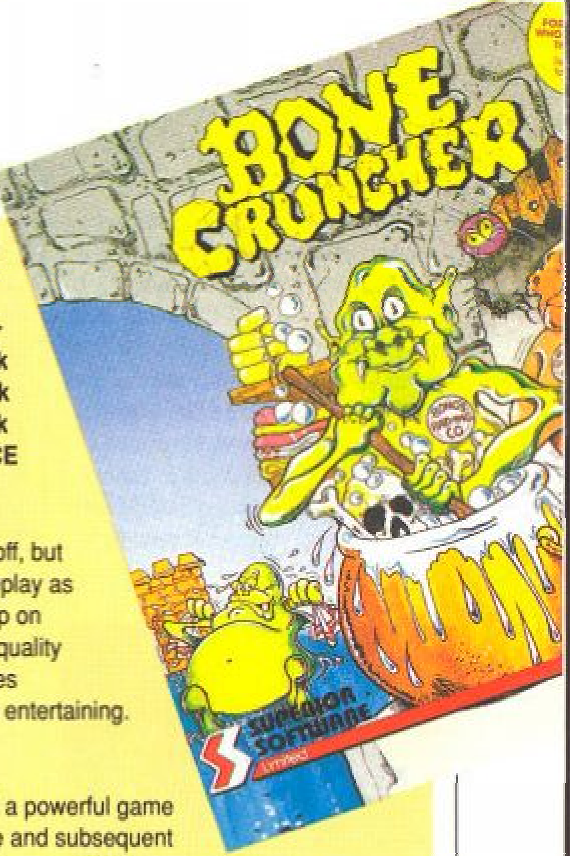
No downward slide in gameplay here.

TIPS

Always keep the team at maximum fitness by training every other race. Good steering is crucial at the top of the run. Lose time here and you'll get a very poor time. Keep on the bottom of the track around the corners – going high usually proves fatal. Watch out for short kinks – they'll throw you out of whack very easily.

TARGET

Break the track record on every course.



BONECRUNCHER

Superior Software

C64/128	£9.95cs	£11.95dk
Amiga		£14.95dk
BBC	£9.95cs	£11.95dk

Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE Rating 943

At first glance a *Boulderdash* rip-off, but soon reveals highly original gameplay as you attempt to collect bars of soap on screens full of hazards. Puzzling quality similar to *XOR* – addictive, at times exceptionally difficult, and always entertaining.

VINTAGE VALUE 920

As addictive as ever, proving that a powerful game design can outlast the test of time and subsequent releases. Some recent releases however, *Dungeon Master* for example, have introduced the brainpower element into more exotic scenarios.

TIPS

Password entry to different screens varies on different versions, but try these: Golemkiller, Golemstench, Morphicle, Scarab, Web of Death, Underground, Hornslut. Always make soap whenever possible.

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird

Spectrum	£7.95cs	
C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
Atari ST		£19.95dk
Amiga		£19.95dk

Reviewed in issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 958

Probably the only coin-op ever to star bubble-blowing, banana-eating dinosaurs, *Bubble Bobble* wowed us this time last year in its C64 incarnation. Since then it's surfaced on a host of other formats, but the timelessly silly gameplay shines through on all of them. Blow bubbles to trap those marauding bullies, leap up to burst the bully bubbles and then eat the fruit that the bullies turn into. It sounds stupid – hell, it *is* stupid! – but when a game's this addictive, who cares?

VINTAGE VALUE 915

Still plays well, but looks a little old now.

TIPS

The randomly distributed extras are the key. Progress fans should watch out for the level-skip umbrella, while high-score addicts will need those potion bottles that fill the screen with bonuses.

TARGET

The game's simultaneous two-player mode is a must for sustained progress. Real addicts should be able to finish the game single handed, mind you.

BUBBLE GHOST

ERE Informatiques/Infogrames

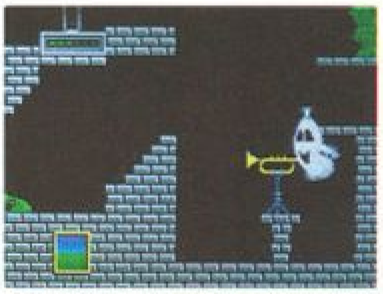
Atari ST	£19.95dk

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 814

Bizarre obstacles threaten to burst your bubble in this engaging little piece of French surrealism. Move your cartoon ghost round behind it and puff your cheeks out to blow that filmy little orb past spikes, through periodically closing gaps and across dangerous air currents. Wacky stuff, with bags of Gallic charm!

VINTAGE VALUE 814
Still wins full marks for weirdness – and playability!

TIPS
Many serious obstacles can be moved or switched off by blowing in the appropriate place. Vary your distance from the bubble to control how much effect your blowing has: from close up you can exert a far greater force.


ST Bubble Ghost - Your soul's in that bubble, and the only way to get it past that head is to blow the trumpet.

BUGGY BOY

Elite

C64	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Spectrum	£7.95cs	£14.95dk
Amstrad	£8.99cs	£14.95dk
Atari ST		£19.95dk
Amiga		£19.95dk

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 906

The spate of car driving games began before this one hit the streets and is continuing even today. Elite took the car off-road and added obstacles to avoid and time bonuses to collect, making it a thoroughly enjoyable drive-em-up. When *Buggy Boy* first appeared it offered something new and exciting – this is not the case nowadays, however. It's still a good game but it's not great any more.

VINTAGE VALUE 863
It's lasted well, but has been superceded.

TIPS
Time bonus gates are the key to completing the game. Go for 'em whenever possible.

TARGET
Complete all five courses.

CAPTAIN BLOOD

Infogrames

Amstrad	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
C64	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Spec	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Atari ST		£24.95dk
Amiga		£24.95dk
IBM PC		£24.95dk

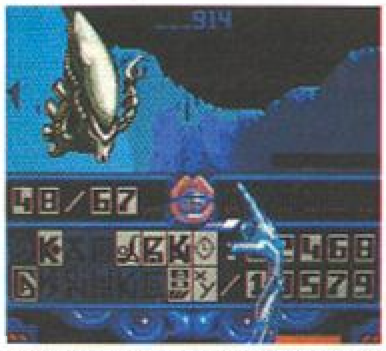
Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 887

Captain Blood's a superb looking space quest/adventure that has you searching a vast cluster of stars for some of your clones. You've got to talk with a whole bunch of different alien types – some of whom are not friendly – in order to get any information that may or may not be of use to you.

VINTAGE VALUE 860
A novel idea well implemented.

TIPS
Note down the various planets' co-ordinates, don't rely on just remembering them.

TARGET
Find all the clones.


ST Captain Blood - Grunt and squeak and squawk with the aliens.

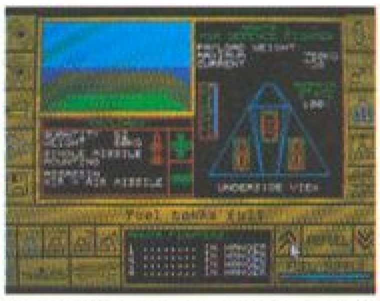
CARRIER COMMAND

Rainbird

Atari ST		£24.95dk
Amiga		£24.95dk
Amstrad	£14.95cs	£19.95dk
Spectrum	£14.95cs	£15.95dk

Reviewed issue 9 – Original ACE Rating 927

This mix of arcade and strategy game boasts some terrific filled 3D graphics and great gameplay. The player plays the commander of one of a pair of aircrft carriers that were on duty in the Southern seas where a series of volcanic islands recently emerged. The other carrier's gone haywire and is set to destroy the islands unless you can defeat it. This is achieved by capturing the islands and using them to manufacture goods for you. You've got to keep all your islands within a network for supplies to be moved around, and this is where your strategic abilities are tested.


Carrier Command ST - Manta 1's re-fuelled, armed and ready for launch.

VINTAGE VALUE 908
Nothing else combines the two genres so well.

TIPS
When loading up a Walrus, put missiles AND a laser cannon in the front compartment. Check out defence islands with a Manta to find which side the command centre is on. Approach with the carrier from that side so that you can take the centre out with the deck laser. Take out the centre before dealing with enemy Mantas. They will then run out of ammo and fuel even if you can't manage to shoot them down.

TARGET
Take out an enemy defence island using only Walruses.

COLOSSUS MAH JONG

CDS

C64	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Amstrad	£9.99cs	£14.99dk

Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE Rating 937

Mah Jong is a rummy-like game played with a special set of tiles. With the computer version you form *pungs*, *kongs* and *chows* onscreen against three computer opponents. They may not be the smartest ever, but they'll certainly give you a run for your money.

VINTAGE VALUE 937
Still a terrific piece of fireside software.

TIPS
The only real skill in the game is choosing which tile to discard. If you don't want to use a tile – especially if it's a dragon or wind – ditch it early: that way you can probably force its partners out of your opponents' hands. Forming a chow may seem like desperation, but if it gets you Mah Jong you should go for one like a shot: if you're that close to Mah Jong then at least one other player probably will be too, so speed is of the essence.

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

Electronic Arts

C64	£9.95cs	£16.95dk
IBM PC		£24.95dk

Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 912

Chuck Yeager's flight trainer is, broadly speaking, a thoroughly enjoyable flight simulator – but that's by no means the whole story. The training options included make this not only fun, but instructive fun. It doesn't take long (if you follow Chuck's advice) before you're achieving such complex moves as aileron rolls and loops. The game's controlled by a series of pull-down menus which life incredibly easy, and all the options make for plenty of lasting enjoyment.

VINTAGE VALUE 912
Still one of the best flight sims around.

TIPS
Listen to Chuck!

CONQUEROR

Superior

Archimedes £24.95dk
Reviewed issue 9 – Original ACE Rating 931

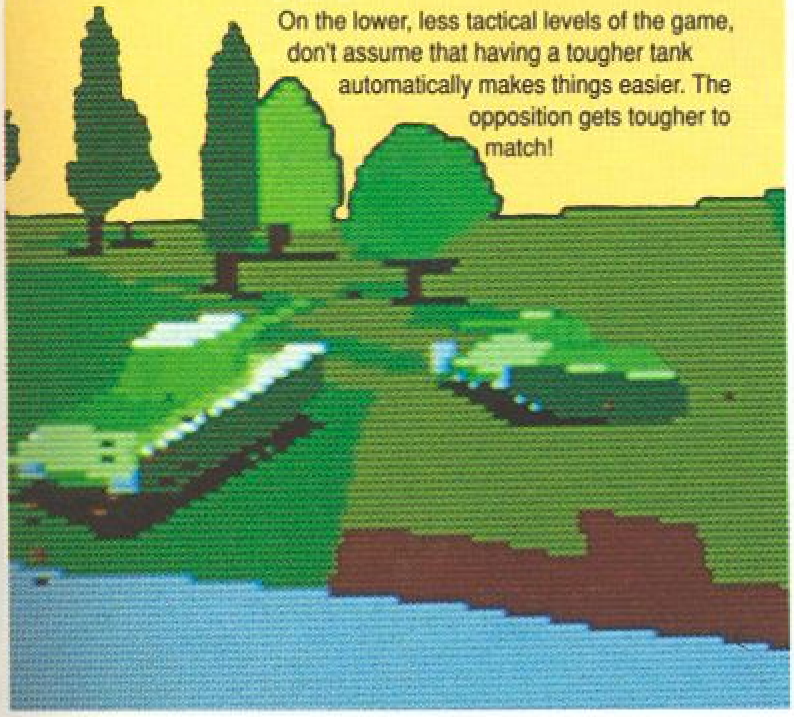
The *Zarch* landscape routines saw action for the second time in this solid 3D tank-em-up for 1Mb Archies only. Choose either Soviet, German or American forces to fight for and then trundle off to battle in a realistic WW2 fighting vehicle. Remarkable chiefly for the way the tanks were actually recognisable, it's an impressive game but lacks the popular appeal of *Zarch*. Good stuff, but probably best left to tank fans.

● VINTAGE VALUE 905

Does look a little limited compared to the later *Carrier Command*.

● TIPS

On the lower, less tactical levels of the game, don't assume that having a tougher tank automatically makes things easier. The opposition gets tougher to match!



COMBAT SCHOOL

Ocean

C64	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE rating 850

This multi-event waggler's based on the popular coin-op and has a distinct military flavour. You and a friend can compete simultaneously through up to seven gruelling events including rifle range practice and arm wrestling.

● VINTAGE VALUE 822

Still one of the better coin-op conversions around, even if the game style is rather old.

● TIPS

Learn where the targets pop up from on the rifle ranges. Waggle like mad!

● TARGET

Get through the game without having to do the chin-ups.

COSMIC CAUSEWAY

Gremlin

C64/128 £9.99cs £14.99dk
Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 900

The sequel to *Trailblazer* that took bouncing balls and scrolling roadways about as far as they can go. It's fast action that's very demanding on the players reflexes and memory of the course. For 64 owners it's still a game that will test to the limit.

● VINTAGE VALUE 820

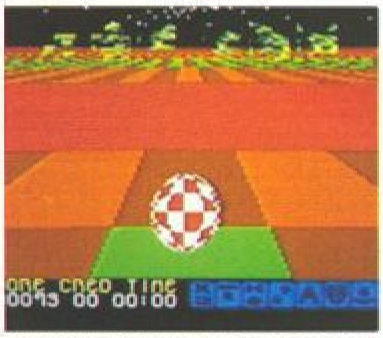
Tough stuff, but ageing fast.

● TIPS

The only way to crack this is to learn the route. If you can remember where you're going then you've just got the aliens to deal with.

● TARGET

Kill a dragon without getting hit.



C64 Cosmic Causeway – That big red band will bring your ball to a grinding half unless you bounce over it.

DAN DARE II

Virgin

C64	**£9.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 838

Virgin's second treen 'em-up is viewed side-on and contains four levels. The idea is for the player to take control of Dan and thwart the Mekon's plans to invade Earth by destroying the life-support capsules of the Supertreens. Good arcade adventure stuff that's great to look at.

● VINTAGE VALUE 805

Dan Dare II's still a worthy game, but there are better games of this sort about nowadays.

● TIPS

Time's your main enemy so make sure you map every level and learn the short-cuts.

● TARGET

Win as the Mekon.

DARK SIDE

Incentive

Amstrad	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Spectrum	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64/128	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 11 – Original ACE Rating 915

The second game to use the Freescape programming system. It is much more of an arcade challenge than *Driller*, as you try to eliminate power towers against a time limit. The graphics are again excellent, as you'd expect, and the more exciting gameplay gives it a much wider appeal.

● VINTAGE VALUE 915

Only big developments will tarnish this ones value.

● TIPS

The crucial factor to getting anywhere is to eliminate a number of towers early on. This will slow the clock down and allow you to spend time working out how to get the trickier towers. The teleport crystals are in some pretty odd spots. Look carefully at the prison cell and some other seemingly useless scenery.

● TARGET

Complete it.

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Mirrorsoft

Atari ST	**£29.95dk**
Amiga	**£29.95dk**
C64/128	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE Rating 826

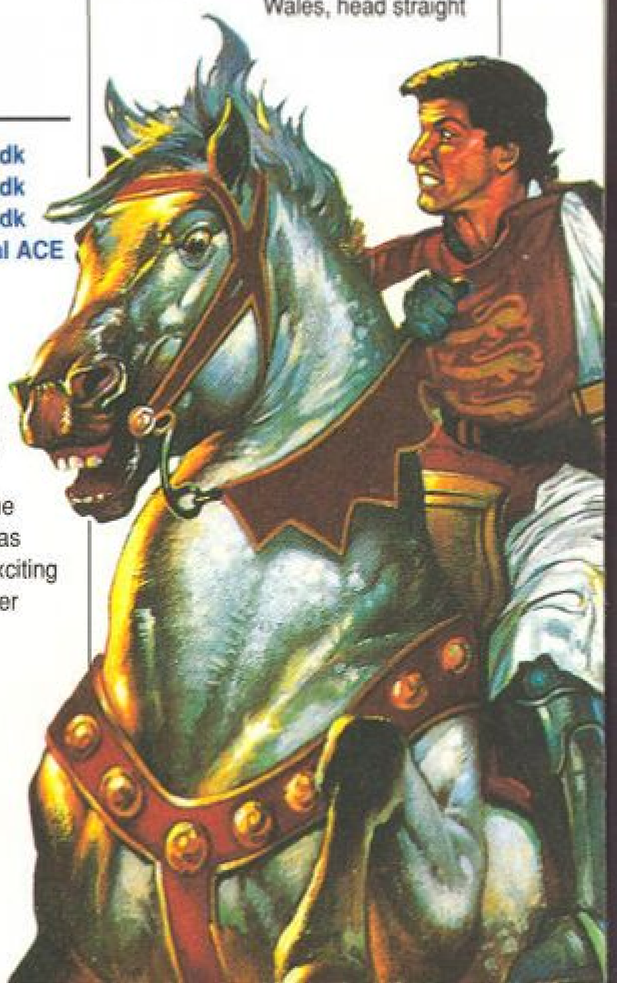
When the game first came out on the Amiga and C64 it was a case of brilliant graphics, shame about the gameplay. The ST version changed that considerably and really perked up the strategy elements. The battle between six nobles to gain control of England is superbly presented and continues to be one of the most graphically impressive 16-bit games. Cinemaware have produced similar quality products like the 3 Stooges and King of Chicago, but DOTC still has an aura of class about it, even if the gameplay is weak.

● VINTAGE VALUE 807

Lacks depth but surprisingly is still enjoyable.

● TIPS

Starting from the castle next to Wales, head straight



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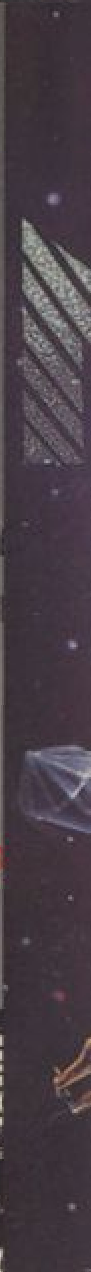

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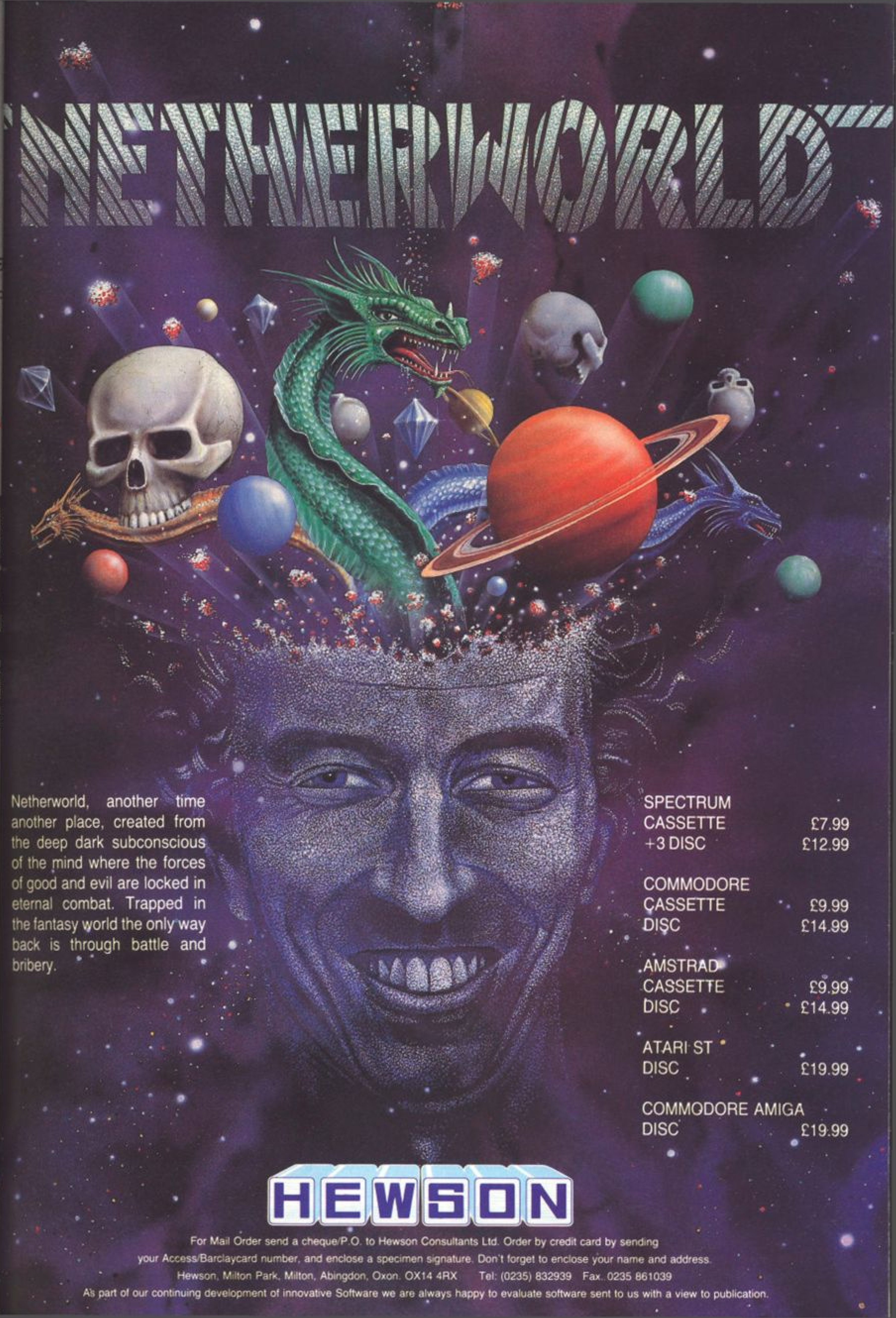

Netherworld, another time another place, created from the deep dark subconscious of the mind where the forces of good and evil are locked in eternal combat. Trapped in the fantasy world the only way back is through battle and bribery.

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down to the castle in Cornwall and take it. You should be able to cut off the army from the castle and capture it. Don't forget to call on Robin at this early stage. The only risk is that your home castle will get attacked in the meantime. If you capture the castle beating the rest should prove easy.

Don't bother with disease or fire when attacking castles. Just make sure you knock down as much of the wall as possible. If a situation looks hopeless then go for a joust. It's risky but can be a last chance to salvage the game by gaining some land.

● TARGET

Win the game and keep the other two Saxons alive.

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin

C64/128	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**
Spectrum	**£7.99cs**	
Amstrad	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**
Atari ST	**£19.99dk**	

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE
Rating 906

Never mind the shoot-from-the-hip type of laser, here we have a laboratory environment full of mirrors, fibre-optics and light scatterers. The aim is to direct the laser at little blobs to destroy them. It calls for a sharp mind to work out the routes and quick reactions to stop the laser overheating, setting off bombs or running out of energy. You could almost call it a puzzle game, and as such there's nothing else like it. It's a bit on the easy side but still great fun.

● VINTAGE VALUE 844

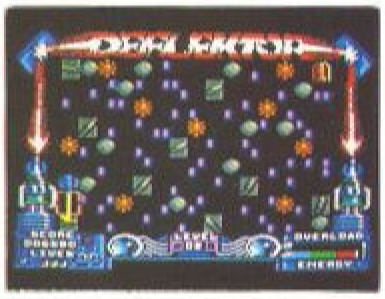
Unique but too easy.

● TIPS

On screens packed with mirrors don't arrange them all, just spin around until the beam ends up near a blob and then switch to the mirror nearest. If a blob seems impossible to hit, spin each mirror slowly through all possible positions so as to test out all the possible angles and reflections.

● TARGET

Complete the game without losing a life.



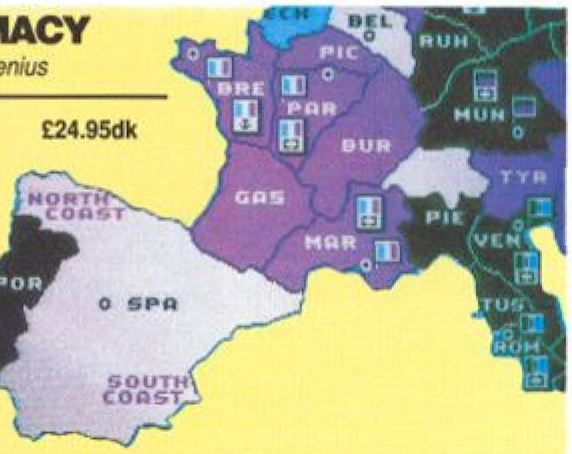
C64 Deflektor - Level 2, and as yet there are no gremlins to mess up your mirrors.

DIPLOMACY

Leisure Genius

IBM PC	**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE
Rating 949



As computerised boardgames go, this is one of the best. Take on the role of a major European power at the turn of the century as the struggle for continental power ensues. Deploy your fleets and armies so as to gain territory from human or computer opponents, and swell your military forces with the increased production this gives you. Connive, betray and conquer: out of seven players only one can win, so alliances clearly aren't going to last forever!

● VINTAGE VALUE 949

Still indispensable for armchair warmongers.

● TIPS

Against six computer opponents you should be able to win every time, even from a weak country like Germany or Austria-Hungary. The key is to watch the computer's orders for the last go. If you haven't changed your position, the chances are he'll make exactly the same move this go.

Against humans it's a tougher business altogether, but the general rules still apply. Don't assume the worst – if everyone gangs up on you you're dead anyway – and make some allowances for other people's mistakes. You can often win well defended positions just by a shrewd guess about what your opponent's orders will be.

● TARGET

If you really fancy yourself as a vest-pocket Von Schlieffen, try this one: win the game from Turkey against six computer players, *without* invading Russia or Austria-Hungary.

DRILLER

Incentive

C64/128	**£14.95cs**	**£17.95dk**
Spectrum	**£14.95cs**	**£17.95dk**
Amstrad	**£14.95cs**	**£17.95dk**
IBM PC		**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE
Rating 956

The first game to be programmed using the Freescape system that creates solid 3D environments that you can go over, under and into. The task was to explore a moon and place drilling rigs on it to release gas under the surface. The rigs have to be accurately positioned in each location. Finding the locations is where the puzzling element comes in and there are some very tricky things to work out. It matches up to all the more recent software and ST and Amiga versions are eagerly awaited.

● VINTAGE VALUE 945

No-one has bettered it yet.

● TIPS

To use teleporters go to Topaz. Use lift by firing at upwards switch. Find hidden tunnel and go to complex K1. Destroy the 4 blocks to make teleporters appear. In Beryl, sever the power lines to the building. Set all the symbols to squares and the doorway to Aquamarine is revealed. Here you'll find the jet in one of the hangars. In Obsidian you have to shoot or knock over the slab to cross the ravine.

● TARGET

Complete it without using the jet.

Relieve dangerous gas build-ups on Mitral in *Driller*.

DUNGEON MASTER

Mirrorsoft

Atari ST	**£24.99dk**

Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE
Rating 949

Take charge of a band of four adventurers and wander through the dungeons of the Lord Chaos searching for the firestaff. The action's viewed through a large window that's surrounded by each character's icons. These icons indicate what the character's holding and their health and stamina levels. There are plenty of spells to learn and cast at the monsters that roam the 14 levels of the dungeon, but you could always resort to bashing them with an axe if you have to. Tricky puzzles, devious red herrings and magnificent atmospheric graphics and sound make this one of the best role playing adventures to have appeared on any machine.

● VINTAGE VALUE 949

A milestone in Advanced Computer Entertainment.

● TIPS

Try luring particularly vicious monsters into doorways and then lower the doors on them. Or stand one side of a pit (closed) and when the monsters are on the pit, open it!

● TARGET

Complete it using only three characters.

EAGLE'S NEST

Pandora

Spec	**£8.95cs**	
C64	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Ams	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Amiga		**£19.95dk**
Atari ST		**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE
rating 904

This *Gauntlet* clone's just as playable on the larger machines as it was on the 8-bit micros. You view the hero from above as he stomps around a German castle dealing leaden death to hundreds of Jerry soldiers.

VINTAGE VALUE 802

Better games of this type have since appeared.

TIPS

Don't collect too much ammo all at once, you can only carry a maximum of 99 shots at any one time.

TARGET

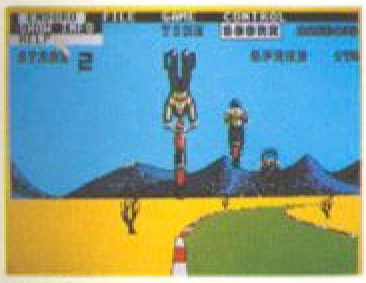
Don't use more than 150 shots on each level.

ENDURO RACER

Activision

C64	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Spec	£7.99cs	
Ams	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Atari ST		£14.99dk

Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE rating 815



ST Enduro Racer – Oops! You should have pulled a wheelie before you hit that jump. Now you're in for a nasty landing...

This coin-op conversion gives you a dirt bike on which to race through five gruelling stages of bumps and twisting roads. Watch out for the rock piles, other riders and jeeps that can all send you flying into a tangled heap of twisted metal. Get through a stage with seconds to spare and the extra time's added to the clock for the next stage, which is handy because the stages get harder.

VINTAGE VALUE 760

A good conversion of the arcade game, but we expect our games to have more of a lasting challenge nowadays.

TIPS

Try typing in the word CHEAT after the countdown, then press the letter T if you want an extra 10 seconds, or the S to advance you one level, or the F for turbo speed (210kmh).

TARGET

Complete it without crashing!

FALCON

Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft

IBM PC	£34.99dk

Reviewed issue 9 – Original ACE Rating 939

The definitive American flight simulator is complex with a capital C. Fly a *very* realistic F-16 on a wide range of missions, step up the difficulty settings as your flying skills increase, and marvel at the attention to detail. The solid 3D graphics should be even better when EGA PC, Atari ST and Amiga versions come through.

VINTAGE VALUE 925

Still very realistic, but *Interceptor* does show up its playability shortcomings rather.

TIPS

Read the manual! It's much, much more than window dressing. You won't get very far at all if you just take to the air and try toughing it out.

TARGET

Land successfully with the HUD switched off in Colonel mode.

FERRARI FORMULA ONE

Electronic Arts

Amiga	£24.95dk

Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 856

As the title suggests, Formula One racing's the name of the game here, with the player firmly in the driving seat. Although driving's the main part of the game there are other things to attend to. What angle should the car's wings be? Can you afford to sacrifice a bit of roadholding for extra speed at this track? Just how rich should the fuel mixture be? Once you're behind the wheel though and waiting for the light to turn green, it's too late to realise you shouldn't be on slicks in this pouring rain.

VINTAGE VALUE 856

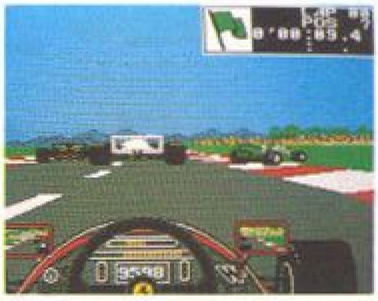
The best racing game available for the Amiga.

TIPS

At the start of a race, count to 2 after the green light's come on, then press the accelerator and keep it pressed. Keep the car in a straight line and if you're on maximum turbo boost you'll find yourself moving up through the pack rapidly – don't be too keen though because a sharp corner is never far away.

TARGET

Win a ten-lap race with manual gearchanging.



Amiga Ferrari Formula One – Right at the start of the race. Even the computer-controlled cars can crash.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR III

Sublogic

IBM PC import only – prices vary
Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 838

The grand old man of flight sims sees its newest version, now with wonderful EGA graphics and some extra comms options. Fly a prop-driven Cessna or executive-style Learjet around North America, learning to fly or just sightseeing. Either way it's instructive and impressively realistic. Action fans will find it completely snooze-worthy mind you, but that comes with the territory.

VINTAGE VALUE 838

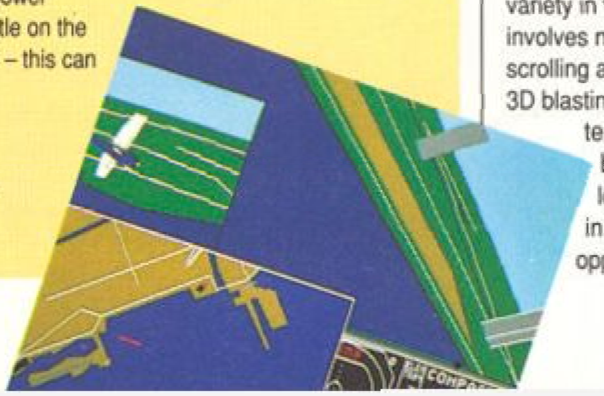
Hardly out of the wrapper!

TIPS

The slow frame and control rates can make you overcontrol, so a little restraint is in order. As with all really authentic flight sims, there's bookwork to be done first. Shirk this and you won't stay airborne long: planes aren't as simple to fly as you might imagine, and with power problems on both planes – too little on the Cessna, too much on the Learjet – this can mess you up very easily indeed.

TARGET

Make a night landing with your instrument lights off.



FLYING SHARK

Firebird

C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Spectrum	£7.95cs	
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 893

A vertically scrolling shoot-em-up this time. You're flying a trusty (if ancient) biplane through five levels of increasingly difficult attack from enemy planes and gun emplacements. There are plenty of extra weapons to pick up, and monster-sized tanks and planes to be destroyed.

VINTAGE VALUE 850

Good graphics, good gameplay, what more do you need in a shoot-em-up?

TIPS

Learn where the planes and tanks are coming from. Collect all the extras and don't hang around at the bottom of the screen.

TARGET

Complete level 1 without extra weapons.

GRYZOR

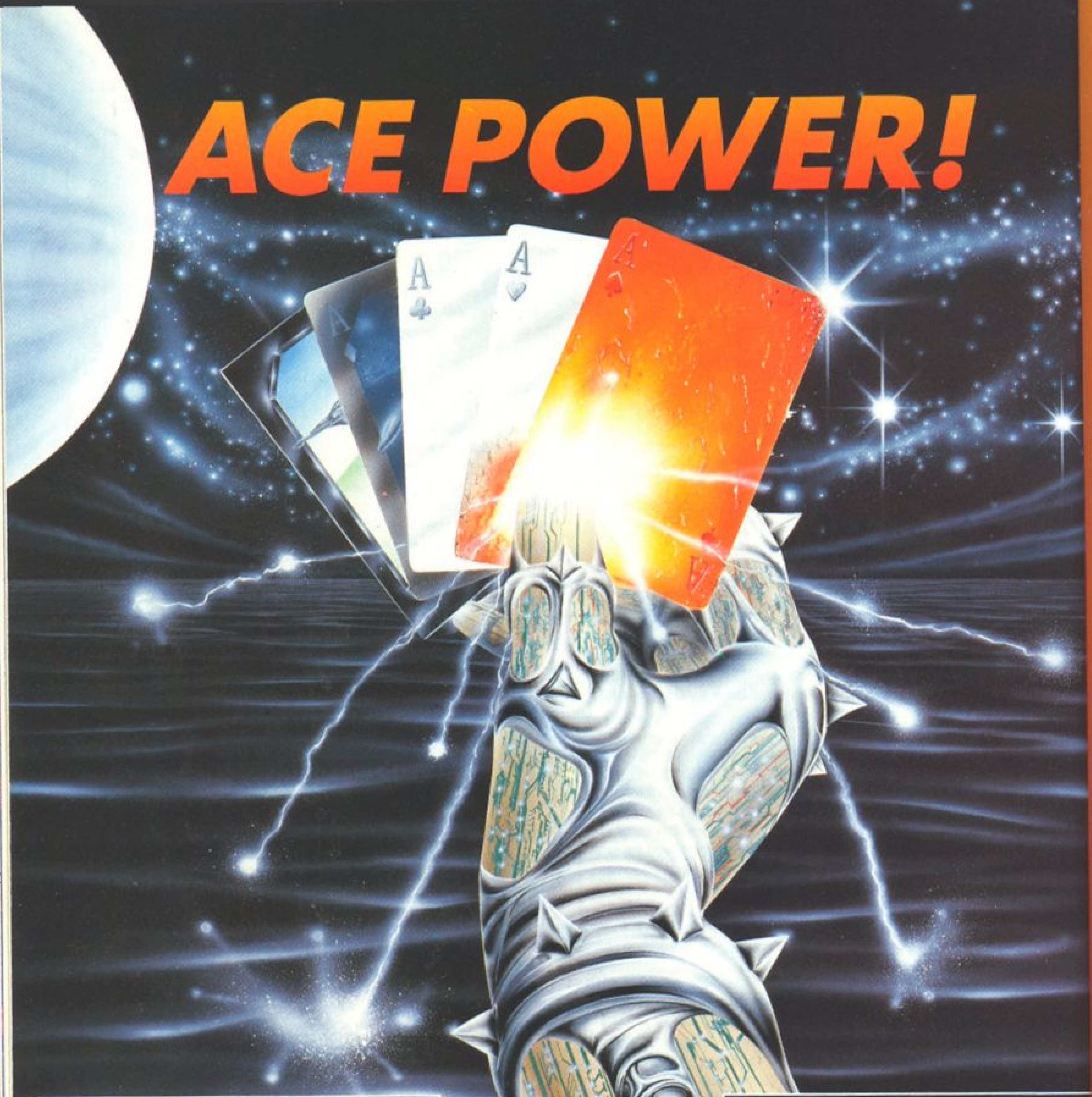
Ocean

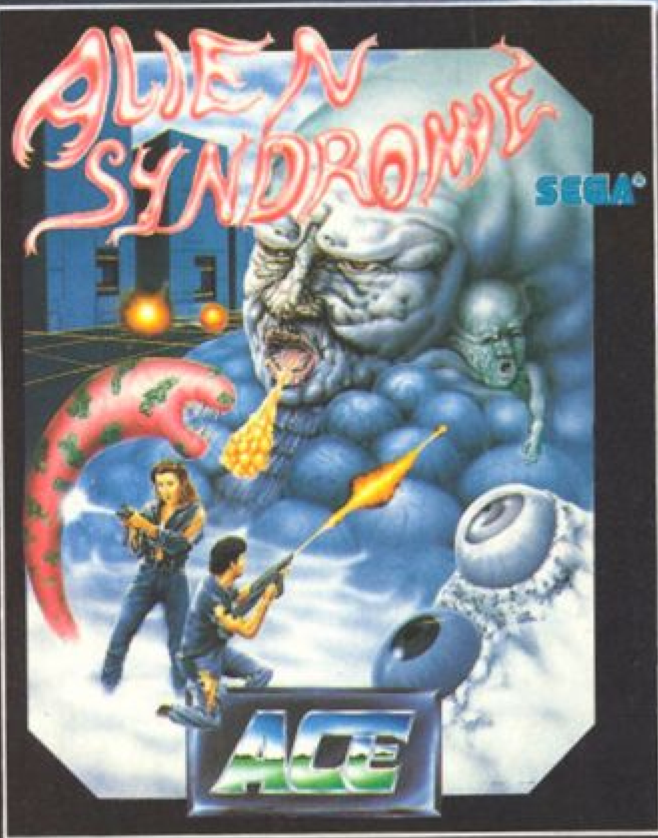
C64/128	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
Spectrum	£7.95cs	£12.95dk

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 771

One of the best coin-op conversions to make its way onto the home micros. This mainly stems from the variety in the gameplay, which involves not only horizontally scrolling action but some pseudo-3D blasting as well. Arcade games tend to get continually bettered, but this one still looks good and plays well in comparison to the opposition.

ACE POWER!

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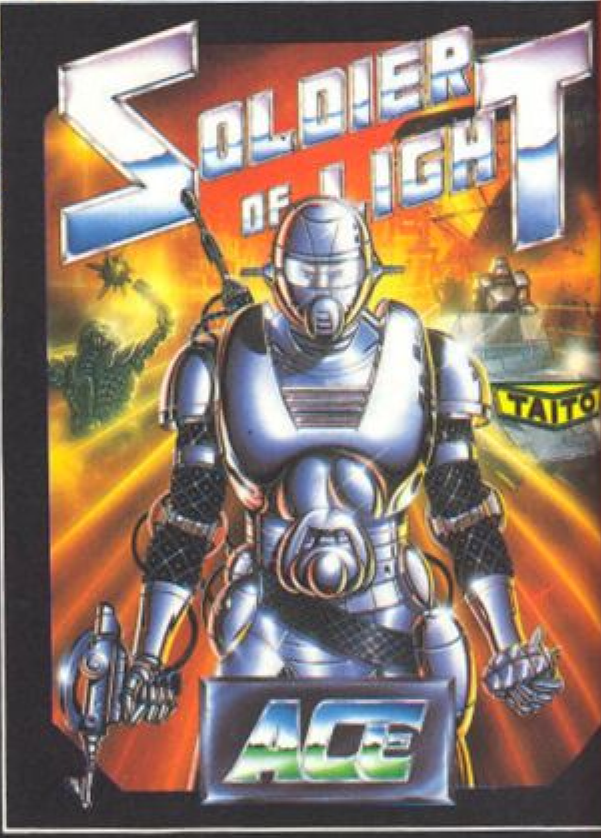
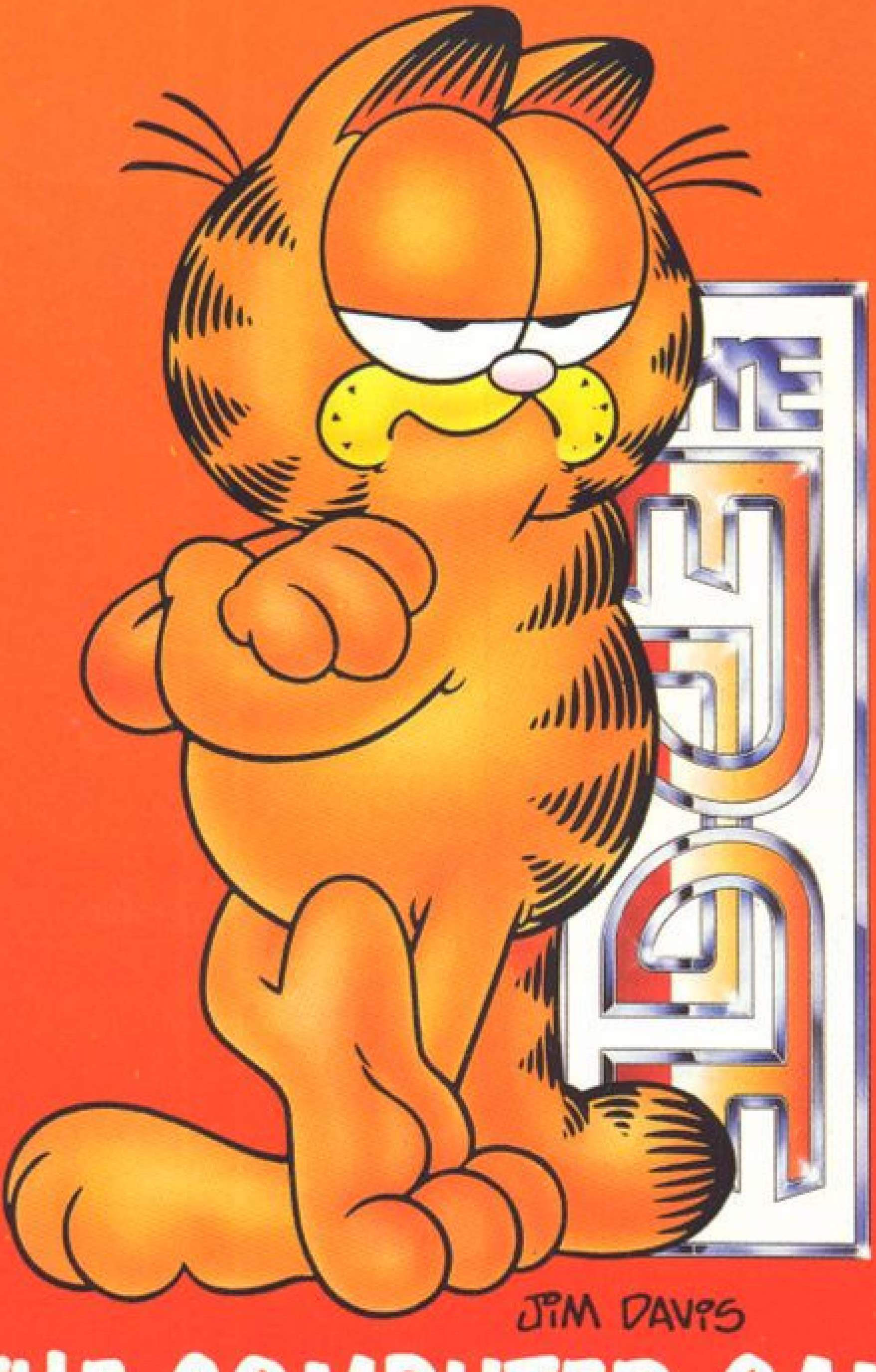

SOLDIER OF LIGHT
TAITO
ACE

Garfield

"BIG, FAT, HAIRY DEAL"



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GARFIELD © 1978 United Feature Syndicate Inc.

VINTAGE VALUE 743
Holds up better than most coin-ops.

TIPS
On the first stage you want to get hold of the scatter gun because it's handy for taking out emplacements at an angle. In the corridor section you should keep moving continuously from side to side to avoid the enemy fire.

TARGET
Complete it without extra weapons.

GUNSHIP

Microprose

Atari ST		**£24.95dk**
IBM PC		**£34.95dk**
C64	**£14.95cs**	**£19.95dk**
Spec	**£9.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Ams	**£14.95cs**	**£19.95dk**
Amiga		**£24.95dk**

A good old gung-ho helicopter flight sim/combat game with an impressive manual. You get to fly missions in several areas starting with flight training in the USA and culminating in combat in Western Europe.

VINTAGE VALUE 802
Pales slightly in the face of strong recent competition.

TIPS
Be warned – flying a helicopter ain't easy. They respond slowly – but just as inevitably – to the controls. And the keyboard overlay is essential.

HELTER SKELTER

Audiogenic

Atari ST	**£14.95dk**
Amiga	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 856

From the same team that brought you *Impact* comes another wildly addictive game. It doesn't look like much but it concocts some wicked puzzles out of a few straight lines, some monsters and a bouncing ball. It relies on the control for most of its appeal and suceeds well. It's got elements of *Bubble Bobble* and it will be interesting to see if any other similar games come out.

VINTAGE VALUE 856
What could happen in a month?

TIPS
Don't panic and don't give up. Even with just a few seconds left you can achieve quite startling screen completions. Learn how to damp the bounce because it can save immense amounts of time.

TARGET
Score 1,000,000 on the pre-programmed screens.

HUNTER'S MOON

Thalamus

C64	**£9.99cs**	**£12.99dk**

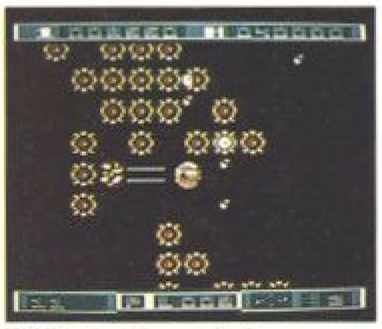
Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE Rating 863

This unusual eight-way scroller sets you the task of blasting into organic alien structures and collecting vital star-cells from within them. The chief problem here is that, being organic, the structures rebuild themselves in a cyclic pattern. Blast your way in at the wrong time and place and you're dead! Some rather odd sub-games and a total of 128 levels add depth to a quirky but enjoyable test of arcade skills.

VINTAGE VALUE 815
Seems a little repetitive in retrospect.

TIPS
Use of shielding is vital to getting those star-cells successfully. Perma shields are all very well while you're learning the line to take through each structure, but in the long term you'll have to rely on the 'momentum' of the temporary protection you get from each star-cell.

TARGET
Want to try some limit setting? Then clear the first three star systems without using any shielding – that is, waiting between star-cells for the short-term shield to wear off.



C64 Hunters Moon – Blasting your way through a colony in search of star cells.

IMPACT

Audiogenic

Atari ST		**£14.95dk**
Amiga		**£14.95dk**
Amstrad	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Spectrum	**£9.95cs**	

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 955

Breakout clones are still pouring onto the shelves even now, but this one still has that something extra. Not only is there the fast action, sharp graphics and musical sound effects, but a screen designer which gives the game much more variety and interest. The sheer weight of clones has devalued *Breakout* games, not that they had much originality or depth going for them anyway. They're still horribly addictive, though, and you'll find yourself coming back to this one time and time again.

VINTAGE VALUE 866
Still the best *Breakout* clone.

TIPS
There are two aims you can go for – points or progress. Points players will collect the spinning staples and take the bonus points at the end of a screen. Progress players will use the staples to get additional powers that make surviving the level easier. Here are the codewords for accessing different screens: gold, fish, wall, plus, head, fork, road, and 'user' for the user-defined screens.

TARGET
Complete 10 levels without using any extra powers.

JET BIKE SIMULATOR

Codemasters

Spectrum	**£4.99cs**
Amstrad	**£4.99cs**

Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 825

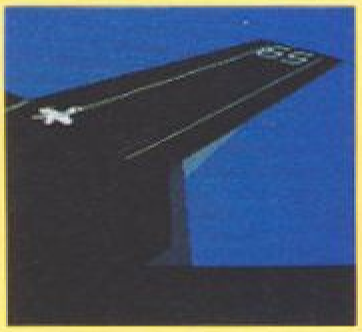
Having almost cornered the market in high class budget software, Codemasters decided to up their prices for their Plus range of games. These offer games players the chance to play both standard and expert versions of the same game. In *Jet Bike Sim* you and a bunch of mates (or computer drones) get to

INTERCEPTOR

Electronic Arts

Amiga	**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 10 – Original ACE Rating 934



The best combination of flight simulation and combat yet. Not to mention the astounding graphics and realistic sound effects. This combat simulator sets you a series of difficult missions. You start off simply by identifying an aircraft, but it soon escalates into dogfights with Migs, chasing after cruise missiles, saving the President's plane and even attacking an aircraft carrier. Unlikely to be bettered for some time.

VINTAGE VALUE 934
Nothing even comes close to it yet.

TIPS
The mission descriptions shouldn't be taken as gospel. On several of them you'll have to change your plans. Remember it's a combat simulator, if things don't co-operate – let 'em have it. One good way of dealing quickly with Migs is to fly very low to the ground under them and then loop up behind them, where you give them a quick missile as soon as it's in range.

TARGET
Shoot down the cruise missile with cannon-fire only.

race around several water courses competing not only against each other but also against a tight time limit.

VINTAGE VALUE 816
Still a good multi-player game.

TIPS
Try playing the expert level first – then switch to standard level and you should find you can hold your own.

● TARGET
Finish first at the Expert level on all the courses.

KARTING GRAND PRIX

Anco

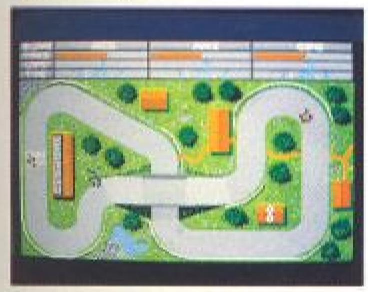
Amiga £9.95dk
Atari ST £9.95dk
Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE rating 844

This is a viewed from above race em-up, that has loads of tracks and some hard to beat computer drones. Not only does the gameplay compare favourably with such classics as *Super Sprint*, but the price is quite attractive too.

VINTAGE VALUE 840
The game's lost very little appeal.

TIPS
Stick to the same track until you get well acqainted with how the kart handles.

● TARGET
Lap the computer drone.



Amiga Karting Grand Prix - That's you in the blue car, just about to crash.

LEATHERNECK

Microdeal

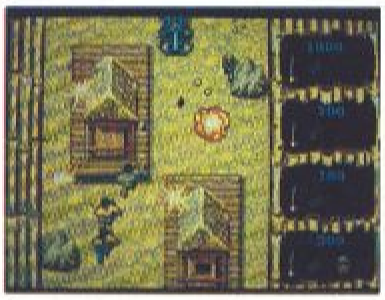
Atari ST £19.95dk
Amiga £19.95dk
Reviewed issue 10 – Original ACE Rating 897

The first game to have four player action, via an interface that allows four joysticks to be used at once. It's basically just a *Commando* derivative, but it's packed full of great graphics, meaty sound effects and violent action. If it's bloodlust your after then this one delivers. *Gauntlet II* has followed it down the four-player path but it hasn't diminished its enjoyment level.

VINTAGE VALUE 880
There aren't many four-player games around.

TIPS
Work in teams of two. Each team takes a side of the screen and relies on the other team for covering fire. Don't shoot your buddies in the back – reprisals are swift. Edge forward slowly up the screen. A gung-ho approach will flood the screen with the enemy and get you dead fast.

● TARGET
Score 100,000.



Atari ST Leatherneck - Player 4 got too close to that explosion and has paid the price.

MAGNETRON

Firebird

Spectrum £7.95cs
C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk
Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 904

Take a standard isometric 3D arcade adventure, add Steve Turner's game-pacing skills, stir in some magnetic physics and what do you get? A little cracker of a game, that's what. Steer your droid around eight multi-screen weapons satellites, shuffle their reactor rods around to shut the power off, and kill or cannibalise any robot that gets in your way. Finely crafted stuff!

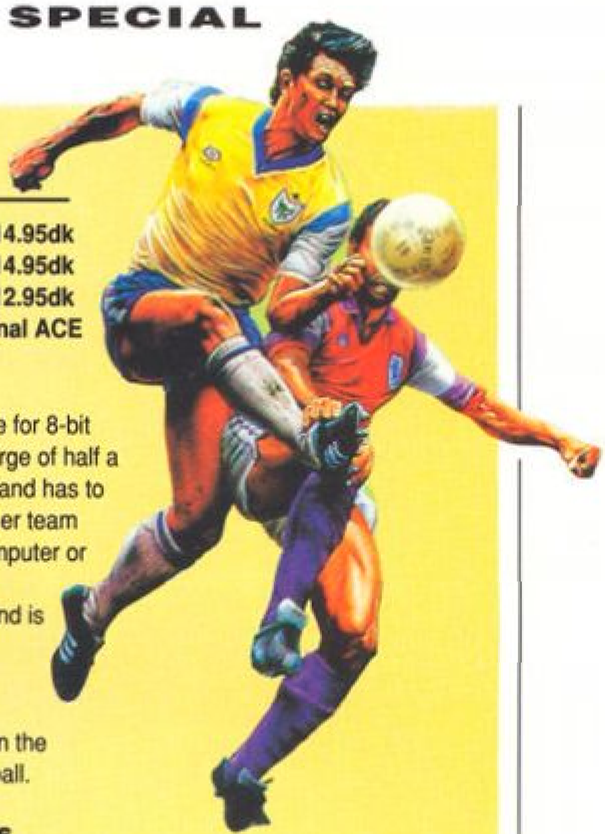
VINTAGE VALUE 865
Looks rather dated now, sad to say.

TIPS
Weight and motive power can be important, but also keep an eye on your level of charge. Floor magnets can become very dangerous indeed once you're carrying a sizable rod: nothing finishes you off quicker than being sent sailing off a ledge!

● TARGET
Complete one satellite using only KLP2.

MATCHDAY II

Ocean



Spectrum £7.95cs £14.95dk
Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk
C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk
Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 906

The definitive football game for 8-bit micros. The player's in charge of half a dozen pixelled footballers, and has to score goals against the other team controlled by either the computer or a friend. Kick strength is determined by the player and is represented by the 'Kickometer' that appears above the character that's either in possession, or is in the best position to reach the ball.

● VINTAGE VALUE 906
There's still nothing to beat it on the 8-bit machines.

● TIPS
Gang up on the computer!

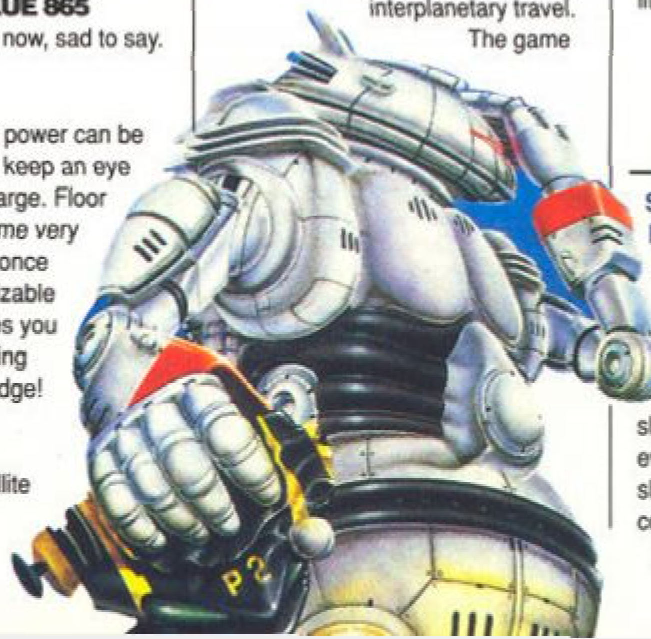
● TARGET
Beat the computer by 4 goals in the F.A. Cup Final.

MERCENARY

Novagen (now available as twin cassette compilation edition including Escape from Targ *and* The Second City*)*

Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk
Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk
C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk
Atari ST £19.95dk
Amiga £19.95dk
Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 894

This 3D vector graphic game set the pace for 'real' environments. You have to get off the planet Targ by first getting to an orbiting space station and then finding a spaceship capable of interplanetary travel. The game even goes underground and has dogfighting action. It has dated because of the introduction of improved game environments like those created by the Freescape system in *Driller*. Filled in graphics and shading help create more atmospheric surroundings. The task remains a good challenge though.



VINTAGE VALUE 823
Vectors lose the realism race to filled in 3D.

TIPS
Underground hangers are located at 03:00, 03:15, 81:35, 11:13, 09:05 and 09:06. That big lump of cheese looks big enough to get into. Don't mess with alien spacecraft, there's little to be gained and a lot to lose.

MOONSTRIKE

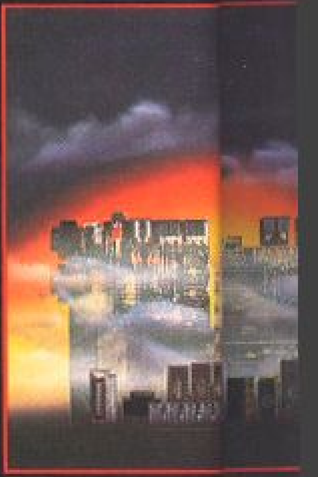
Mirrorsoft

Spectrum £7.95cs
Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 898

Written in New Zealand and set on the Moon, this vertically scrolling shoot-em-up has strong shades of *Xevious*. If anything it's even slower though, relying on the sheer weight of enemy fire – consisting of light bulbs, coins and

COME AND SEE US ON STAND No 3101 THIS YEAR AT THE PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW 14th-18th SEPTEMBER EARL'S COURT, LONDON.

AMIGA
£24·95



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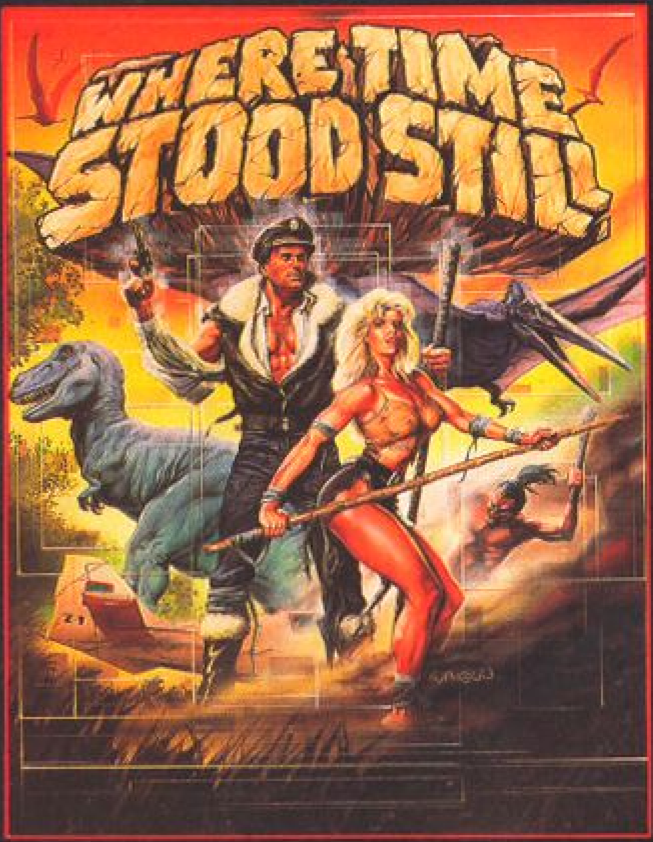
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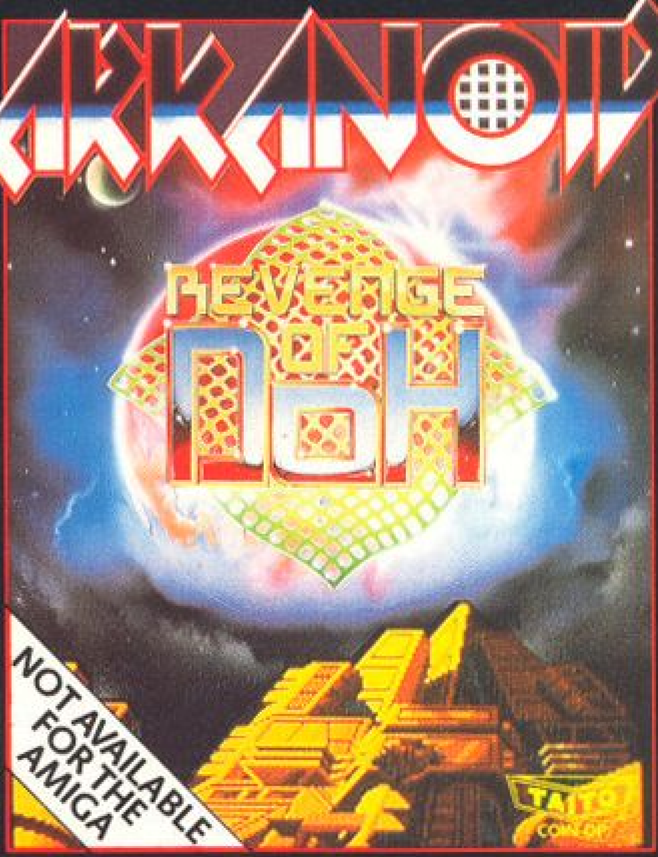
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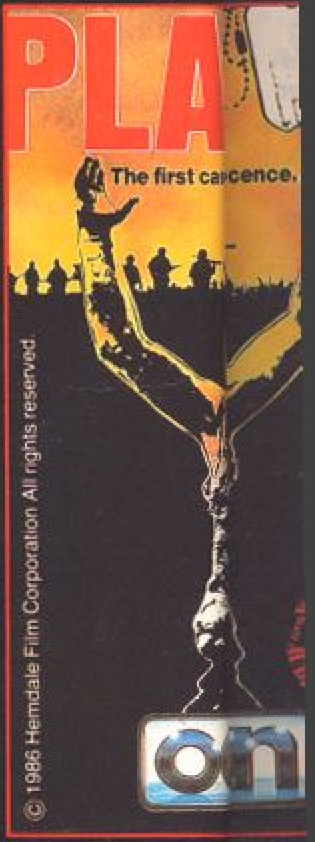
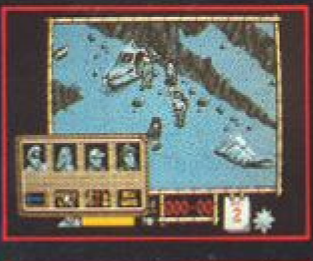
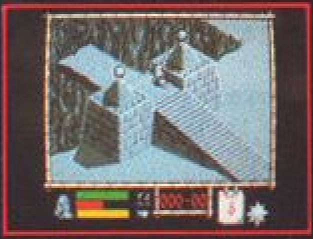

PLA
The first ca cence.
© 1986 Hemdale Film Corporation All rights reserved.

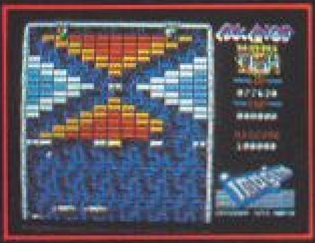
Your plane has ditched on a mountainous plateau somewhere in deepest Tibet. You and your companions are alive. A large shape moves toward you, you rub your eyes in disbelief; a Dinosaur! – where are you ... and when? Stunning, monochromatic 3D graphics and 4 way scrolling, give that '50's cinema mood as you learn not only to survive, but also that your companions are not all they first seemed!

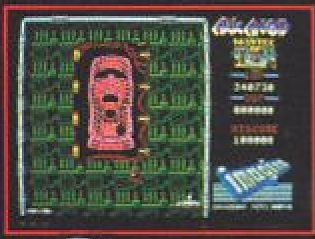




FROM ocean

One phrase sums up the success and appeal of Arkanoid – "I'll just have another go!" Arkanoid is addictive! Using all the capabilities of the 16 bit micro this conversion is almost an exact replica with all the excitement of the original Taito coin-op smash hit. This is Arkanoid – the blockbuster.





FROM Imagine ..the name of the game

Exceptional graphics, inn
game design and digitise
all add up to recreate the
atmosphere generated i
office smash hit. Closely
the original storyline you
your platoon, selecting i
men for assignment, wh
encounter the enemy an
many booby traps as you
find the enemy's underg
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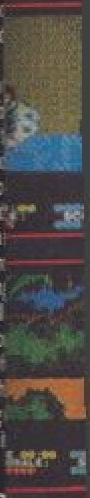
flares and a keen eye – y
enemy will lunge at you,
beneath the waters whic
the tunnel floor, wielding
knives – the atmosphere
enough to kill!



FRO

16 BIT STATE

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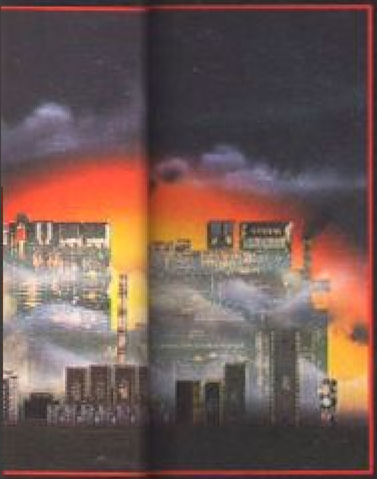
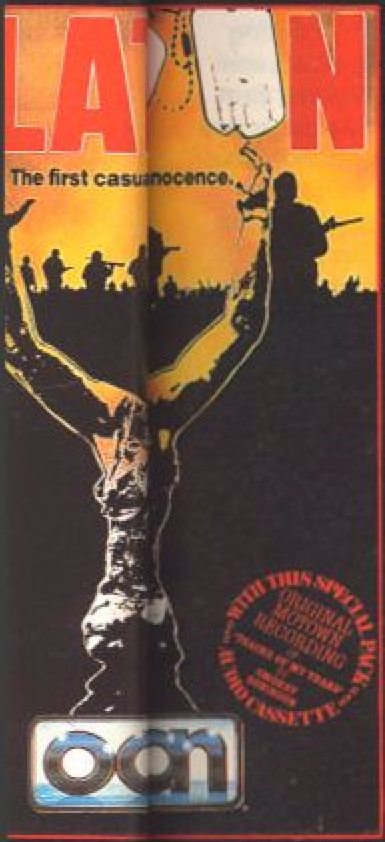


ATARI ST £19.95

ENTERTAINMENT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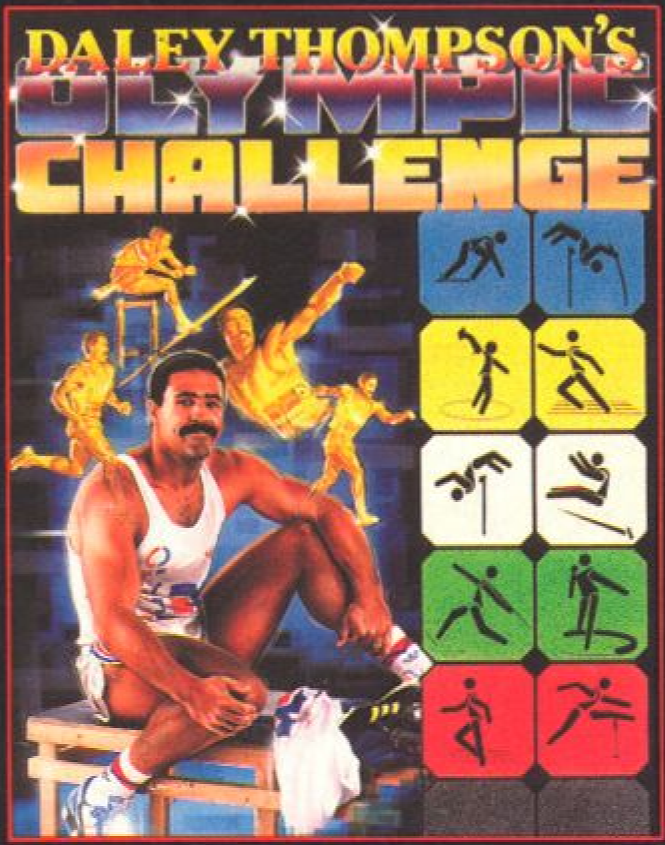
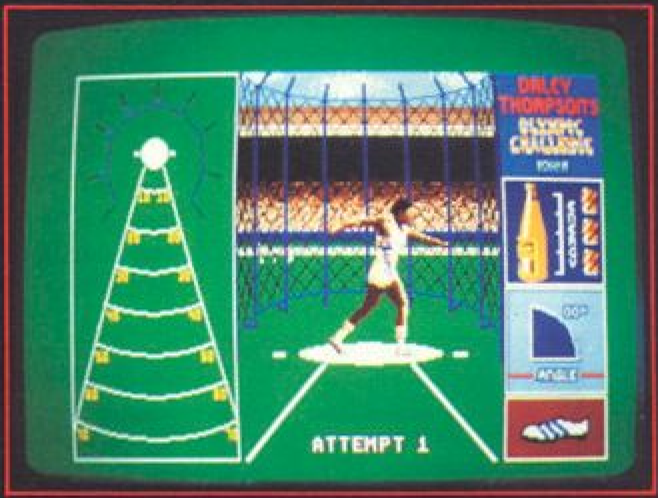
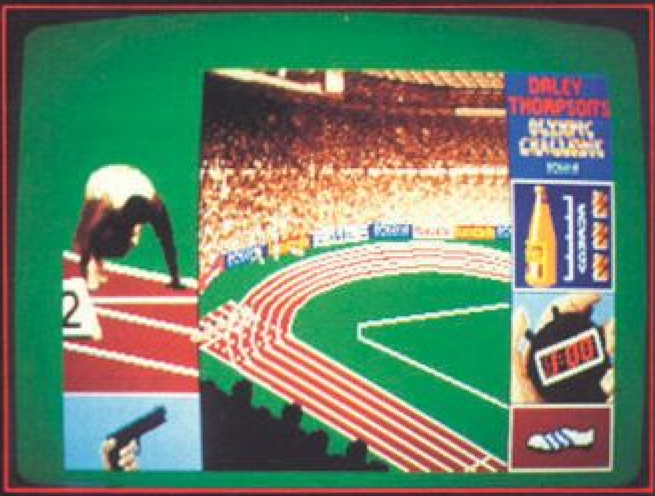
The first casu nocence.
WITH THIS SPECIAL PACK ORIGINAL MOTOWN RECORDING AUDIO CASSETTE
ocean


DALEY THOMPSON'S
OLYMPIC
CHALLENGE


DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE
ATTEMPT 1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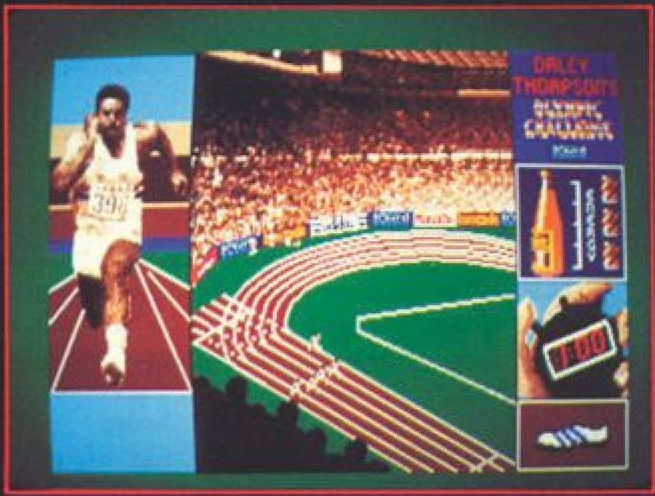
DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

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FROM
ocean

DALEY IS BACK Enter the 1988 Olympic Challenge with Daley Thompson as you 'work out' in the gym, where your efforts will directly affect your performance in the competition itself – another first from Ocean.

Ten Olympic events include Long Jump, Shotput, High Jump, 100m Sprint, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin and 1500m. You will need all your skills to build on what you hope was, an impressive work-out, and, as is necessary for all top flight athletes, your judgement to select the most effective equipment for each event is now vital – a decision which can win or lose you a place on the podium.

This isn't just another sports simulation, this is a Daley Thompson 'event' where all his talent and humour burst through to make a thrilling and enter taining game play for all the family. Go for the Olympic Challenge!

FROM
ocean

E OF THE ART

5NS · Te e 061 832 6633 · Telex 669977 OCEANS G any other ridiculous bric-a-brac they can come up with – to put the pressure on you. Backdrops and ground details include pizzas, 6502 chips and the Mona Lisa. Old hat and mono it may be, but what a load of wonderfully surreal nonsense it is!

VINTAGE VALUE 740

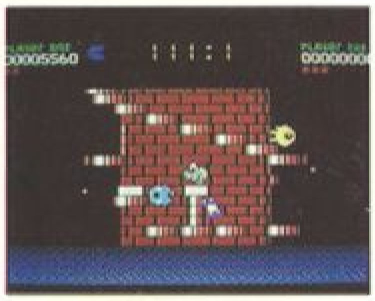
It wasn't a new game style even then: now it really looks old.

TIPS

Stay well up the screen so as to hit ground defences early. When you fire and pull back to release a bomb, veer off to one side immediately to avoid defending fire. This goes double for the end-of-level fortresses.

TARGET

Lunar experts can feel pretty smug if they can reach the Mona Lisa without losing a life, but their joysticks'll be a bit of a mess by then.



C64 Nebulus - Can Pogo make the jump from the jlift over the top of the bouncing sphere?

NEBULUS

Hewson

C64/128	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Spectrum	£7.95cs	
Amstrad	£9.95cs	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 943

The platform game reached new heights of originality and compulsiveness with this tower turning epic. Your cute character Pogo has to make his way up towers in the sea. Reaching the top causes the tower to collapse and Pogo to move onto the next one. The towers are superbly constructed with disappearing floors, corridors through them, lifts, deadly objects and all sorts of nasty traps. You'll need to put plenty of brainwork into solving tricky situations, as well as fighting time limits and the devious aliens. An instant classic that hasn't been bettered.

VINTAGE VALUE 930

It remains the ultimate in wacky platform games.

TIPS

Watch out for disappearing blocks because they crop up just when you've been lulled into a sense of security. Learn the timing of the flying alien so that you don't get caught in a spot where there's no escape route up, down or through a door. Remember that getting high enough above aliens makes them disappear – this comes in very handy on some towers.

TARGET

Complete Tower 7.

NIGHT RAIDER

Gremlin

Atari ST		£19.99dk
Spec	£9.99cs	£12.99dk
C64	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Ams	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
IBM PC		£19.99dk
Amiga		£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 773

Not terribly realistic, but nevertheless an enjoyable flight sim/strategy/action game which sees you at the helm of a Grumman Avenger based on the Ark Royal. Set out on one of five hair-raising missions to sink the Bismarck, battling against a variety of U-boats, E-boats and Dorniers.

VINTAGE VALUE 773

It's hardly dated since we reviewed it...

TIPS

Set up your approach carefully using the map screen when going in to strafe a U-boat or E-boat – you won't find them by randomly flying around the ocean. Hang on to the last minute before releasing your torpedo at the Bismarck. Fire too early and you'll miss, and the mission will fail.

TARGET

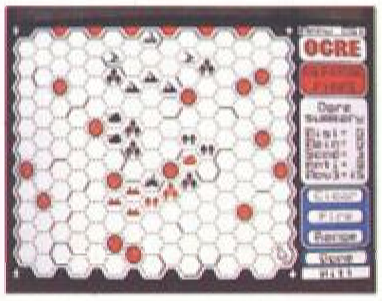
Sink the Bismarck!

OGRE

Origin Systems/Microprose

C64	£19.95dk
IBM PC	£24.95dk
Amiga	£24.95dk
Atari ST	£24.95dk

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 813



Amiga Ogre - The defenders launch a concentrated attack on the fearsome Ogre's tracks.

This one or two-player wargame's set in the 21st century and is based on the Steve Jackson board game. The action takes place on a 15 x 21 hexagonal map, and the idea is for one player (or the computer) to control a monster fighting machine (The Ogre) and try to capture the defending player's Command Post. Wargames have certainly moved on since *Ogre* first appeared, making it look very dated. The game's too simplistic and too limited by today's standards to warrant the original high PIC value.

VINTAGE VALUE 650

The standards of strategy software have risen dramatically in the last year.

TIPS

Take out the Ogre's tracks as early as possible.

TARGET

Destoy the Ogre with an all-GEV defence.

OUT RUN

Sega/US Gold

Sega		£24.95cr
Atari ST		£19.99dk
C64/128	£9.99cs	£11.99dk
Spectrum	£8.99cs	
Amstrad	£9.99cs	£14.99dk

Reviewed issues 2 and 5 – Original ACE Rating 852

It was an great game in its Sega console incarnation, a dreadful one on the 8-bit machines and back to greatness on the ST. It's nothing more than a racing game in which there's an undulating road, lots of traffic and many obstacles. Its fame started in the arcades and resulted in massive sales of the home versions. It's hard to see now that there was much special about it, even the most recent and much improved ST version. There have been better racing games in the past and doubtless will be in the future.

OIDS

Mirrorsoft

Atari ST	£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 969

Imagine *Thrust, Defender, Choplifter* and *Asteroids* all rolled into one and this is what you get. The task is to scour planet surfaces for Oids to rescue, while battling the overwhelming alien defences. The controls are superb and the planets intricately designed to be extremely devious. The graphics don't look special but the action is unrelenting. It's lost none of its attraction and doesn't have any competitors.

VINTAGE VALUE 955

Still one of the best games around.

TIPS

Keep a close eye out for spikes popping out of the landscape. The tip starts flashing as you get near – a warning of impending doom. Don't pussyfoot around with bases. Get a full load of nova bombs, fly in and let it have three as fast as possible. Always enter teleports very slowly because you frequently pop out in confined spaces. Don't pick up Oids until you've cleared the surrounding area of the enemy. Accidentally shooting Oids or dying with some on board is an unforgiveable sin.

TARGET

Complete Trianguloids.

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SEGA MASTER SYSTEM Power Base

The Sega console hasn't made as big a breakthrough over the last year as was expected, but software of the quality of Out Run could still establish it firmly as a leading entertainment machine. Of course, it will face stiff competition from the rival Nintendo console.

VINTAGE VALUE 692
Racing games become kerb crawlers fast.

TIPS
The routes stay the same, so make sure you learn the best one for you to survive. Keep your foot to the floor and use gears to change your speed when necessary. Drive as fast as you can. Don't crash. Mind the trees.

● TARGET
Complete the first stage with twelve seconds to spare.

PHOENIX

ERE Informatiques/Infogrames

Atari ST	**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 887

This abstract piece of French 3D-ware sends you hurtling down a wireframe tunnel in the depths of space. Your object is simply to reach the end without running off the tunnel surface, and that's not an easy proposition. Surface panels can drain or boost your energy, lock your controls up or simply not be there. The controls are tricky to say the least, making a very simple game oddly, even maddeningly addictive.

VINTAGE VALUE 780
Looks a bit simple for full price now, but it's still worth playing.

TIPS
Concentrate on your controls the whole time, especially on long diagonal stretches. If you lose the rhythm of the control movements you're as good as dead. The weirdest thing about playing this game is the teeth-gritting factor. In places you simply *have* to run over an energy loss panel, the alternative being death. Don't let this get to you: the lack of restart points will wind you up enough as it is.

● TARGET
Complete the first stage with your eyes shut (it is possible).

PHM PEGASUS

Electronic Arts

C64	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Spectrum	**£8.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
IBM PC		**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 831

Patrol Hydrofoil Missilecraft, just in case you were wondering what the PHM stood for. You play the commander of one such vessel (The Pegasus) and it's your job to complete a series of missions each within a time limit. The emphasis is more on action than strategy, though tactics play an important part. For action fans, the game's still a *real* treat.

VINTAGE VALUE 820
It's aged well.

TIPS
Don't waste ammunition, and watch the radar's range setting. It's no good having it set to maximum range when there are a large number of ships in the immediate vicinity.

● TARGET
Complete a scenario without taking a single hit.

PLATOON

Ocean

Spectrum	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Amstrad	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Atari ST		**£19.95dk**
IBM PC		**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 801

An above average game-of-the-film, Ocean's jungles and tunnels epic takes you through a clutch of Vietnam-flavoured sub-games. Search the village, defend your foxhole and then escape an air-strike in your quest to...well, to re-enact the film really. Reactions and mapping skills are at a premium as you struggle to defeat some rather comic-book Viet Cong fighters, not to mention the odd psychopathic American – all of which works great on the C64 and rather poorly on other machines.

VINTAGE VALUE 715
Inevitable deaths and big-league frustration take their toll.

TIPS
The key to the game is a methodical approach. If you're too lazy to map as you go along (and who isn't?) check out Ian Thompson's guides in ACE issues 8 and 11. Oh, and on the C64 version be sure to stoke up with supplies just after the bridge in Part 1.

● TARGET
Complete Level 1 without switching men or getting killed in action.

PLEXAR

Mastertronic

Spectrum	**£2.99cs**

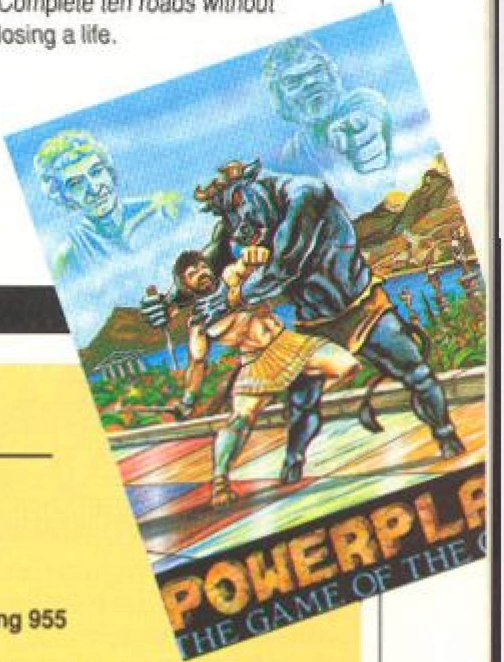
Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 887

As a Plexarian (a cute, bouncy ball) you've got to bounce your way across some 16 roads that span your home world. Some of these roads lead to dead-ends, but if you're fortunate you'll be able to switch to an overhead road that might lead you further – but beware, your controls are reversed on overhead roads. Tough, addictive and tremendous fun.

VINTAGE VALUE 805
Still a good bouncy ball game.

TIPS
If you're having trouble in the game, remember that certain squares (diagonal black and white lines) make you bounce backwards one square – tricky when there are lots of squares next to each other. The solution is simple – bounce on to the square and before you bounce back move the joystick (or keys) to move you in the opposite direction. The square thinks you've landed on it from the opposite direction and thus bounces you the other way – which is where you want to go!

● TARGET
Complete ten roads without losing a life.



POWERPLAY

Arcana

C64	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Ams	**£9.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
Atari ST		**£19.95dk**
Amiga		**£19.95dk**

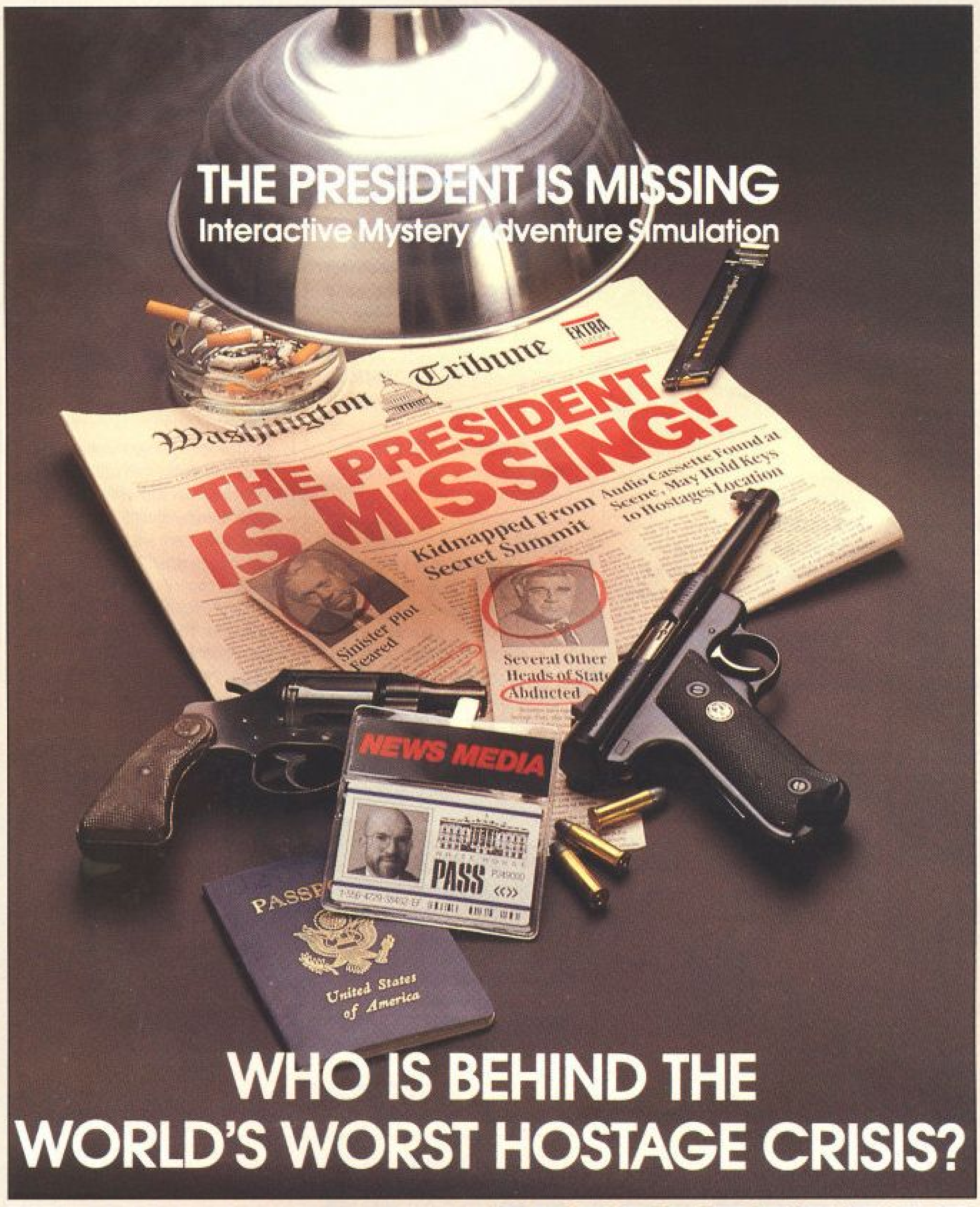
Reviewed issue 6 – Original ACE Rating 955

A cross between *Trivial Pursuit* and *Draughts*, *Powerplay* is set against a backdrop of Greek mythology. Get the answer to a trivia question right and you can move a piece on a chequered board as you attempt to beat your human or computer opponent (up to four can play). Engage an enemy piece in combat and you have to do battle in a trivia quiz either on Mount Olympus, Medusa's Cave or over a lava pit. If you win, the opposing piece is demoted in status. If you lose, you're the one in trouble. A fascinating blend of two game styles.

● VINTAGE VALUE 955
Still the best of its type

● TIPS
Don't let your pieces stand around in one place for too long, or they'll get fidgety and start moving about of their own accord. The squares on the board are colour-coded according to the subject matter – choose your route according to the subjects you're surest of.

● TARGET
Complete the game without mutating.


THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING
Interactive Mystery Adventure Simulation
Washington Tribune
EXTRA
THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING!
Kidnapped From Secret Summit
Audio Cassette Found at Scene, May Hold Keys to Hostages Location
Sinister Plot Feared
Several Other Heads of State Abducted
NEWS MEDIA
PASS
PASSPORT
United States of America
WHO IS BEHIND THE WORLD'S WORST HOSTAGE CRISIS?

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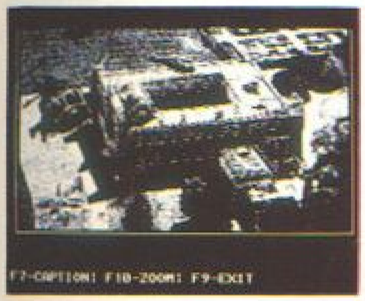
THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING

Cosmi

IBM PC	**£24.95dk**
C64/128	**£12.95dk**

Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 785

A sleuth-em-up in which you have to track down the leaders of the Western nations who have been kidnapped by terrorists. There are photographic files, documents and an audio tape that you can examine in your search. It's a tough game to get to grips with but very rewarding to succeed at.



PC President Is Missing - A surveillance shot of the site of the kidnapping as the terrorists make their helicopter getaway.

● VINTAGE VALUE 785

Unlikely to have much competition for a while.

● TIPS

Don't ignore any evidence at all. It may take a while to sift through and follow up, but it's well worth it.

● TARGET

Rescue the President.

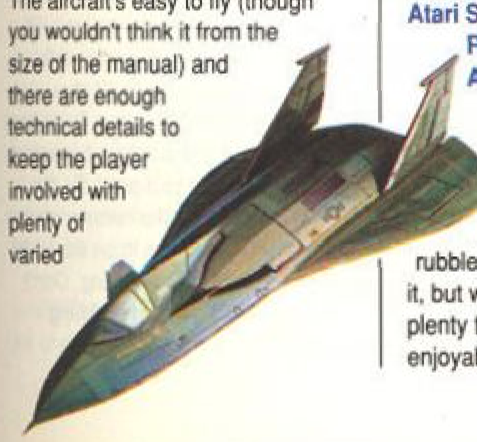
PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose

C64	**£14.95cs**	**£19.95dk**
Spectrum	**£9.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£14.95cs**	**£19.95dk**
Atari ST		**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 863

This combat/flight sim includes four scenarios, with several missions to be completed within each scenario. The aircraft's easy to fly (though you wouldn't think it from the size of the manual) and there are enough technical details to keep the player involved with plenty of varied missions. Overall, the game's aged well and is still deserving of a high PIC value.



● VINTAGE VALUE 849

There's enough different and varied missions to keep a player flying even today.

● TIPS

Keeping your EMV low is essential while approaching combat, so keep that speed right down. Once you've engaged the enemy, forget about stealth: your weapons systems will light you up like a Xmas tree whatever you do!

● TARGET

Brigadier General is a very tough rank to reach indeed, but you should aim to make Major with at least a DFC to your credit.

QUADRALIEN

Logotron

Atari ST	**£19.95dk**
Amiga	**£19.95dk**
IBM PC	**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 10 – Original ACE Rating 850

Your task is to decontaminate a multi-level reactor using a team of six different droids, but there's a strong strategic edge to complicate matters. Manage your resources, solve puzzles as cleanly as possible and explore a large game area. Enthralling stuff, but the task's so enormous you may feel overwhelmed.

● VINTAGE VALUE 850

It hasn't had time to age yet!

● TIPS

There's no point going into a level with your guns blazing. If you can't solve the early game sections without a whole load of blasting, your energy simply won't last you long enough.

QUEDEX

Thalamus

C64	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 934

A self-styled QUEst for DEXterity, this Finnish-programmed title features ten levels so different that you could almost call them sub-games. In each one you're trying to steer a metallic ball from the starting point to an exit, but the obstacles techniques you'll needed vary. The whole thing's played against the clock, so even when you've learnt your way around you'll still have a biggish arcade-skills task.

● VINTAGE VALUE 845

One year on, originality's not such a rare commodity.

● TIPS

The game revolves around time management and the free choice of what order you do the levels in. Learning a level, you'll want to have as much time in hand as possible, so work out levels you can make a 'time profit' on beforehand. The only problem with running up excess time in advance is that the game steps up the difficulty with each level you tackle. In other words, leaving the hardest till last could make it even harder!

● TARGET

Real hard cases should aim to complete the game levels in numerical order, or better still an order chosen by their worst enemy.

RAMPAGE

Activision

C64/128	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**
Amstrad	**£9.99cs**	**£14.99dk**
Spectrum	**£9.99cs**	
Atari ST	**£14.99dk**	

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 887

Legalised hooliganism, as three monsters go on the loose smashing the cities of America into piles of rubble. That's about all there is to it, but with three player action and plenty to smash and eat it's enjoyable stuff. Seems simple by todays standards because of the lack of a long term aim or variety.

● VINTAGE VALUE 692

Simplicity and lack of variety have hurt its appeal.

● TIPS

Keep the monsters fed. They only lose strength slowly, but in this war of attrition every bit of energy is crucial. It's much easier working as a team. The buildings go down faster – so don't beat up on your friends.

RANARAMA

Hewson

Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64/128	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95cs**
Atari ST		**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 890

One of the more successful *Gauntlet* derivatives that enhanced the exploration part of the action. The main character is a frog, battling evil forces to return himself to his handsome princely self. As well as the usual range of monsters and generators there are a whole range of spells for enhancing power, shield, shots etc. It came towards the end of the glut of *Gauntlet* clones and still stands out as one of the best containing many different features.

● VINTAGE VALUE 811

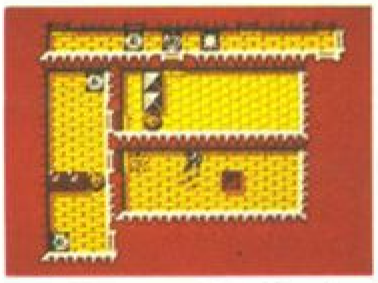
Has survived better than most clones.

● TIPS

Always increase your power level before anything else, otherwise shields and weapons will drain your energy too quickly. Collecting runes is crucial to long term survival. Don't just rush through the first couple of levels ignoring them. Caution pays. Don't charge through the rooms – clear them out systematically.

TARGET

Complete the game without destroying any generators.



Amstrad Ranarama - Viewed-from-above maze action from Hewson.

REACH FOR THE STARS

SSG/Electronic Arts.

IBM PC £24.95dk
Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 940

Just one of the Australian Strategic Studies Group's titles that E.A. are now distributing over here. It's a space conquest/exploration game for up to four players. A multitude of options can be chosen to make life difficult and the inclusion of the advanced scenario means you'll be playing this for a long time to come.

VINTAGE VALUE 940

A terrific strategy game.

TIPS

Spend the first few turns building up your economy (and those of a couple of neighbouring planets) before you go too far afield.

TARGET

Conquer the galaxy using only MkI technology ships.

REBELSTAR

Firebird

Spectrum	**£1.99cs**
Amstrad	**£1.99cs**

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 900

Originally released by Red-Shift as *Rebelstar Raiders*. Take charge of 10 or so raiders in an attempt to destroy the Isaac computer at the heart of Moonbase Delta. Either the computer or a friend can play the part of the defenders. Simple to play but hard to put down.

VINTAGE VALUE 840

Well worth searching out a copy.

TIPS

Spectrum owners should try assembling all their men at the top air-lock (including combat droids) but leave the group (and droid) at the bottom most air-lock (the one between the defence lasers). Send in the combat droid from the bottom group and keep moving him along the outside of the gardens – save a shot for the defence laser. Keep him moving along the bottom and all the defending droids will come running after him. Once the airlock's clear you can send in your small band to take out the other defense lasers, and at the same time break in through the top air-lock and make a dash for the Isaac computer. Get the hang of this and you'll find the game a lot easier to win.

TARGET

Destroy the Isaac computer without losing a man (or combat droid).

RED LED

Ariolasoft

C64/128, Amstrad, Spectrum – currently undistributed.
Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 910

Marble Madness meets shoot-em-ups to produce a unique game. Three droids with different capabilities have to create a route across a board by entering hostile landscapes. Here they have to master control problems, blast aliens and collect objects.

VINTAGE VALUE 880

Survived well, with few imitators.

TIPS

Mapping is crucial – you have to remember which landscapes are where so that you know which of the three droids to use. Extra time capsules are crucial to survival. Plan a route that gets as many as possible. There's a couple in the hexagon just below the centre. Smart bombs and freezes are handy at the end of a level when making a break for the exit, because the droids attack vigorously after you've got the last energy pod.

TARGET

Try using the same droid on all the landscapes.

THE R.T. SMITH TRILOGY

CCS

Arnhem	**Spectrum**	**£8.95cs**
	Amstrad	**£9.95cs**
	C64	**£9.95cs**
Desert Rats	**Spectrum**	**£9.95cs**
	Amstrad	**£9.95cs**
Vulcan	**Spectrum**	**£9.95cs**
	Amstrad	**£9.95cs**

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Ratings – Arnhem 910, Desert Rats 905, Vulcan 930

R.T. Smith is widely regarded as the undisputed king of the 8-bit wargame scene. Mr Smith's managed to produce three classics. *Arnhem* was the first, followed by *Desert Rats* and *Vulcan* (arguably the best). The ordering system in each game is the same (and why not? It's simple to use and elegant) so once you've got the hang of one game it's easy to get into the others. Curiously R.T.Smith's last release was an arcade adventure (*Cyberknights* from CRL) which was not as good as his wargames. But he's currently working on a new wargame for CCS – who are now planning to release some of their games on the larger machines (*Desert Rats* for the PC will be here first, with others following shortly).

VINTAGE VALUE

(Arnhem) 910, (Desert Rats) 905, (Vulcan) 930

All of these wargames have lasted well, and it looks like R. Smith's hit upon a winning game formula.

TIPS

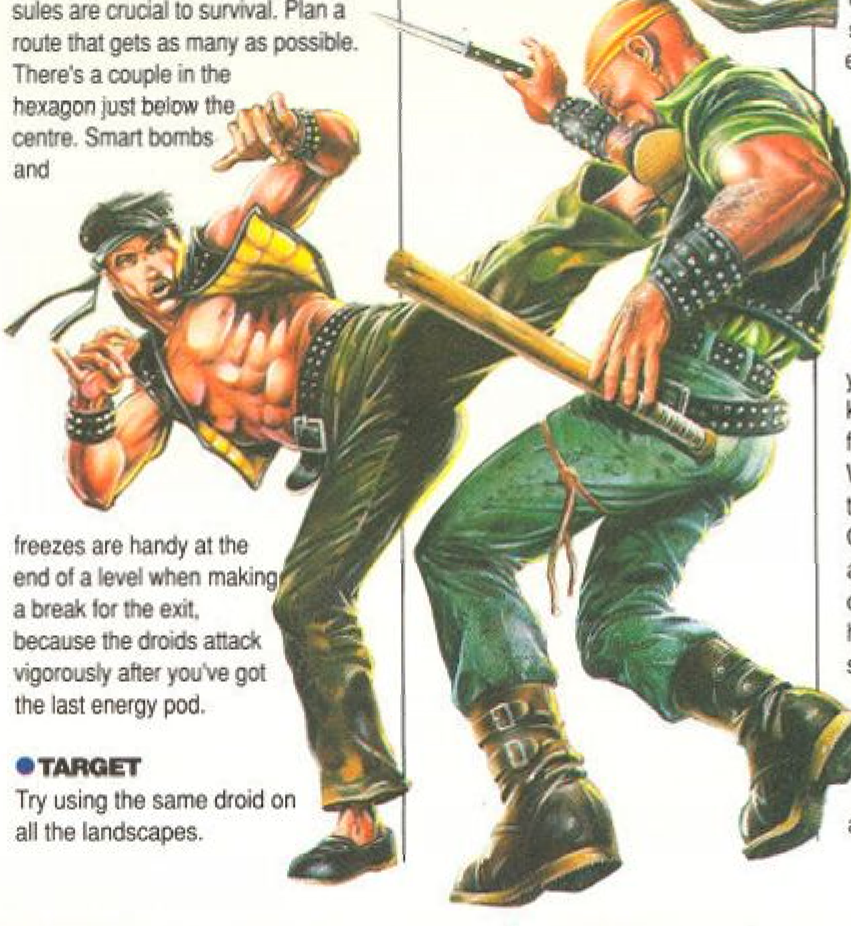
Don't overextend your forces. Keep your supply lines protected.

RENEGADE

Imagine

Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64/128	**£8.95cs**	**£12.95dk**
Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 847



This beat-em-up still stands out as one of the best around. A sequel, *Target; Renegade*, has recently appeared with even more outlandish characters and action. The original ran into a storm of controversy because its release coincided with the Hungerford massacre. Concern was strong enough to get the blood in the game altered to pleasant shade of blue, rather than red. Beat-em-up action hasn't lost any of its immediate appeal in the meantime, but today the gameplay seems shallow and the levels too few.

VINTAGE VALUE 641

Combat games don't age well.

TIPS

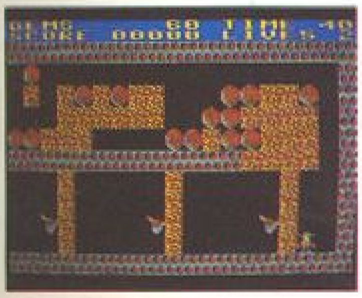
Some levels have ledges. Kicking your opponents off them gets a quick kill. Get rid of the weapon carriers first because they really hurt you. When opponents are down, kneel on them and pummel for a quicker kill. On stage three you have to back away from Big Bertha until she charges towards you, then flying kick her. The timing is crucial – otherwise she'll smash you to a pulp. On the final stage, once the henchmen are disposed of, close in on the leader and he'll stop shooting. Don't back off or he'll start shooting again.

● TARGET
Complete it without pummeling.

ROCKFORD

Melbourne House

Atari ST £19.99dk
IBM PC £19.99dk
Amiga £19.99dk
Spectrum £2.99cs
C64/128 £2.99cs
Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 832



C64 Rockford - Those pistols follow the outside of the cave, so make sure you time your run carefully.

This *Boulderdash* derivative had the involvement of the original author Peter Liepa, but never quite stirred up as much excitement. It had lots of new features and screens that added an extra dimension to the game. It's a game style that looks old hat now, despite its undoubted addictive qualities.

● VINTAGE VALUE 674
A game style whose time is running out.

● TIPS
Remember that by using the fire button you can remove the block next to you without having to move there – very handy in some situations. You can out-run objects as they fall – again crucial for solving some problems.

SALAMANDER

Imagine

Spectrum	**£7.95cs**	
Amstrad	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**
C64	**£8.95cs**	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 881

This horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up's the home micro version of the Konami coin-op classic. Fly your spacecraft through a series of tunnels and try to survive the bombardment from the flying and ground-based aliens. *Salamander's* a tough game to crack – partly because it sends you so far back once you lose a life.

● VINTAGE VALUE 823
As shoot-em-up's go it's still good.

● TIPS
Learning the routes is essential, as is knowing when a bonus is coming up. Don't try to take everything out, just destroy those obstacles that are blocking your route.

● TARGET
Get to the first restart point without extra weapons.

SAMURAI WARRIOR

Firebird

C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk
Reviewed issue 9 – Original ACE Rating 737

If *Watership Down* had feudal rules of etiquette and a biggish dose of swordplay, it still wouldn't quite manage the offbeat charm of this absurd bunny-em-up. You control the samurai rabbit Usagi Yojimbo in the quest to avenge his master, battling heavily disguised ninjas and showing courtesy to his betters. It's more arcade adventure than combat game, but manages to combine the two gameplay forms remarkably well. The animation's great too!

● VINTAGE VALUE 737
Still the one and only for samurai rabbit fans.

● TIPS
To get extra jumping distance, draw your sword. This puts you into fighting mode, where your running jump is long enough to clear most chasms – but remember to put your sword away afterwards!

The closest thing the game has to a lives structure is the karma system. You'll soon learn how much karma you need to reach each reincarnation point, so you can buy yourself 'life insurance' by giving money to peasants.

Even the humblest yokel could be a ninja in disguise, so stay alert at all times.

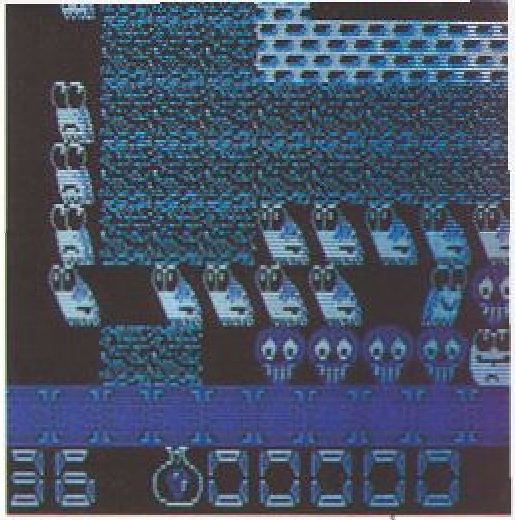
SKULLDIGGERY

Currently undistributed

Atari ST £19.95dk
Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 919

100 screens of tricky timing problems, fierce time limits and puzzling will keep you going for a long, long time in this *Boulderdash* clone. You have to gobble the required number of diamonds before you can leave each cavern, at the same time avoiding the unwelcome attentions of the Crystal Bats and Crazy Ghosts.

● VINTAGE VALUE 883
A classic of its type as good now as ever it was.



ST Skulldiggery - You've got 78 diamonds to collect, 36 seconds left and a bunch of miserable ghosts to contend with.

● TIPS
Drop skulls on the Crazy Ghosts to get more diamonds – you'll need the extra on some screens. Crystal Bats explode when hit, so they can be useful for breaking through solid walls.

SKY CHASE

Imageworks

Amiga £19.99dk
Atari ST £19.99dk
Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 785

A two-player air combat game which takes place over a limited-area gridded landscape. You can fly any one of several different jets and select the level of armaments they carry. The game ends simply when one player (computer or human) has shot down the other. A little bare to look at, but you get the chance to play against a human opponent. Brilliant fun.

● VINTAGE VALUE 785
The minimalist graphics will surely be beaten by new releases, but this has to be the way forward.

● TIPS
Missiles are a lot more foolproof than cannon-fire. DON'T give the computer the paper dart.

● TARGET
Shoot down the paper dart with cannon-fire.

SPIDERTRONIC

Infogrames

Atari ST £19.95dk
Reviewed issue 9 – Original ACE Rating 903

This game combines weird Escher-style perspectives with some testing gameplay to provide one of the better games to have come over the channel from France. The spider you control collects blocks in a maze of platforms to pave his way to the exit. It's all about quick thinking and sharp reflexes as you try to out-wit the deadly bouncing balls. There's noth-

THE SENTINEL

Firebird

Amiga £19.99dk
Reviewed issue 11 – Original ACE Rating 963

This has to be one of the most colossal games ever, with 10,000 possible landscapes. Each landscape is a chequerboard of ramps, drops and platforms, dotted with trees – and The Sentinel. This ghastly being slowly rotates, scanning the landscape and absorbing anything it can to turn into more trees – and that includes you. The only way you can defeat the Sentinel is to gain enough height to absorb him. To gain height you'll need boulders to stand on, which needs energy gained from absorbing trees. A simple principle, but an incredibly compelling game.

● VINTAGE VALUE 963
Still utterly...absorbing.

● TIPS
Every time you move, make sure you re-absorb your old robot and any boulders it was standing on – energy is crucial. Some screens have one or more Sentries – smaller, but equally lethal, minions of the Sentinel. Take these out as soon as you can see the square they're on. If you're half visible and being 'half-scanned' you won't lose energy but you must still move, otherwise a 'meanie' will be sent to warp you into hyperspace – fatal if you don't have enough energy. If you can survive a landscape with a Sentinel and six Sentries you're an expert!

● TARGET
Reach landscape 500 without taking out any Sentries...

ing similar to it, so the gameplay is still quite fresh and original.

VINTAGE VALUE 876
An unusual game concept that no-one else has picked up on.

TIPS
Avoid creation points for the balls because there's no time to react if you get caught going over one. Pick up all the time bonuses you can because you never know when you'll have to do a lot of back-tracking. Check carefully before taking lifts that nothing will be coming in the other direction or appearing at the bottom, because there's no turning round half-way.

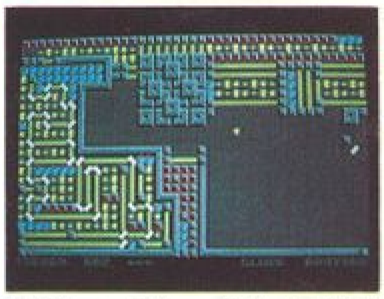
TARGET
Complete the pre-programmed levels without using any webs.

SPORE
Mastertronic

Spectrum	£1.99cs
C64	£1.99cs

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 919

Manically violent stuff. Your job's to collect barrels of pesticide from a series of single-screen levels, but to reach them you'll have to blast your way through hordes of energy-draining spores. Generators turn out more spores the whole time, so these become important target in their own right, while security beams blocking your path have to be switched off to open up large areas of each screen. Terrific fun, including a construction set.


C64 Spore - Grit your teeth, shoot that barrier, and a dozen spores will swarm out to attack you.

VINTAGE VALUE 908
Still a real bargain!

TIPS
The best tactic for taking those spores out is to release them, and then run away. This strings them out behind you, so that you can blast them all in one go without risking attack from other sides.

Blasting wildly is a very bad idea. The key to progress is to take out one batch of spores at a time, leaving the others cooped up behind security beams. Stray shots can release vast numbers of them all at once, putting you in real danger. You're better off taking a bit of energy drain than risking this.

The aim is to collect cannisters – *not* to blast spores. If you can leave some of the little critters cooped up and still get all the pesticide, so much the better.

TARGET
Don't use repulsing agent.

SUPER SPRINT
Electric Dreams

Spectrum	£9.99cs	
C64/128	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Amstrad	£9.99cs	£14.99dk
Atari ST		£19.95dk

Reviewed issue 2 – Original ACE Rating 907

A cracking arcade conversion where the emphasis is very much on sharp reflexes. Multi-player action adds to the fun, as does the ability to improve your cars' cornering, acceleration and top speed. The construction set followed soon after to add further lasting interest, even if some graphic quality was lost. Looks overrated these days unless you're heavily into the two-player option.

VINTAGE VALUE 783
Still addictive, but lacked the depth to last long.

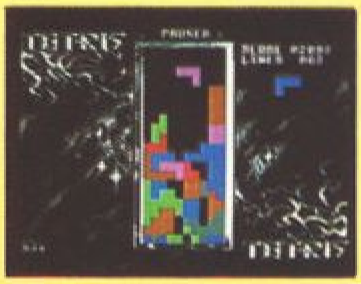
TIPS
Always grab as many spanners as possible because upgrading the car is the only way to stay in contention in the long run. Go for increased cornering grip and acceleration to start with. Leave a higher top speed for later because it causes more time consuming explosions when you crash. Avoid the whirlwind like the plague – it can spin you right out of contention in a tight race. The oil slicks are less of a problem, particularly if they're on a straight – just keep the power down.

TARGET
Try it without spanners.

TETRIS
Mirrorsoft

C64	£8.99cs	£12.99dk
Ams	£8.99cs	£12.99dk
Spec	£8.99cs	£12.99dk
Atari ST		£19.99dk
Amiga		£19.99dk
IBM PC		£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 956



A geometrical Russian puzzler that runs a lot deeper than it seems. Simply guide the falling blocks onto those below so that they fit in to form solid lines – which then disappear. What looks like something you could program in BASIC in half an hour turns out to be incomprehensibly addictive. You just have to stop those blocks building up to the top of the screen to keep going. Of course, the longer you play, the faster they fall...

The PC and C64 versions are the best, while the ST and Amiga versions are, disappointingly, worse than their 8-bit counterparts.

VINTAGE VALUE 956
Unique.

TIPS
Try not to let those build too high because that gives you even less time to react. And avoid forming long, vertical gaps, as these can only be filled by one or two of the shapes – you can guarantee they never turn up when you need them.

Scoring is quite complex, but basically it's best to start on the highest level you can handle. Above all, you have to be quick, decisive – and preferably right. One mistake at the higher levels and you're submerged within seconds. Don't wait too long for just the right piece to fill a gap. Write that line off temporarily and concentrate on the one above it rather than let blocks pile perilously high. Keyboard control is definitely worth a try rather than joystick.

TARGET
20,000 points.

TEST DRIVE
Electronic Arts

C64/128	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Amiga	£24.95dk	
Atari ST	£24.95dk	

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 826

Every car fanatic's dream is realised in this driving simulation where you can get behind the wheel of a Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lotus, Porsche or Chevrolet. Then it's a hard drive along a perilous mountainside road. As a simulator it's still one of the most accurate, but as a game it's been superceded by other more action-packed titles.

VINTAGE VALUE 721
Nice simulation but not enough action.

TIPS
On the Amiga version you can keep the car in the same position on the road by holding down the fire button on the joystick.

TARGET
Get to the dealer without crashing.

THUNDERCATS
Elite

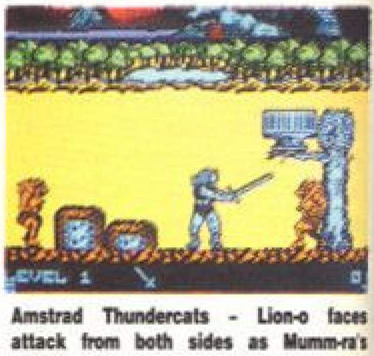
C64	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Spec	£7.95cs	
Ams	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
Amiga		£24.99dk

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 931

A simple sideways-scrolling hack-em-up. What it lacks in terms of complex gameplay and graphic finesse it makes up for with simple, addictive playability. Recent releases have tended to shade *Thundercats*, but whether any of them offer better old-fashioned arcade action is another matter.

VINTAGE VALUE 816
Dated, but still playable.

TIPS
Timing is everything as you must co-ordinate ducking and slashing for those smaller opponents, and perfect your turn-and-slash for those coming up behind you. The time limit means that you shouldn't walk when you can run.


Amstrad Thundercats - Lion-o faces attack from both sides as Mumm-ra's cohorts prepare to attack.

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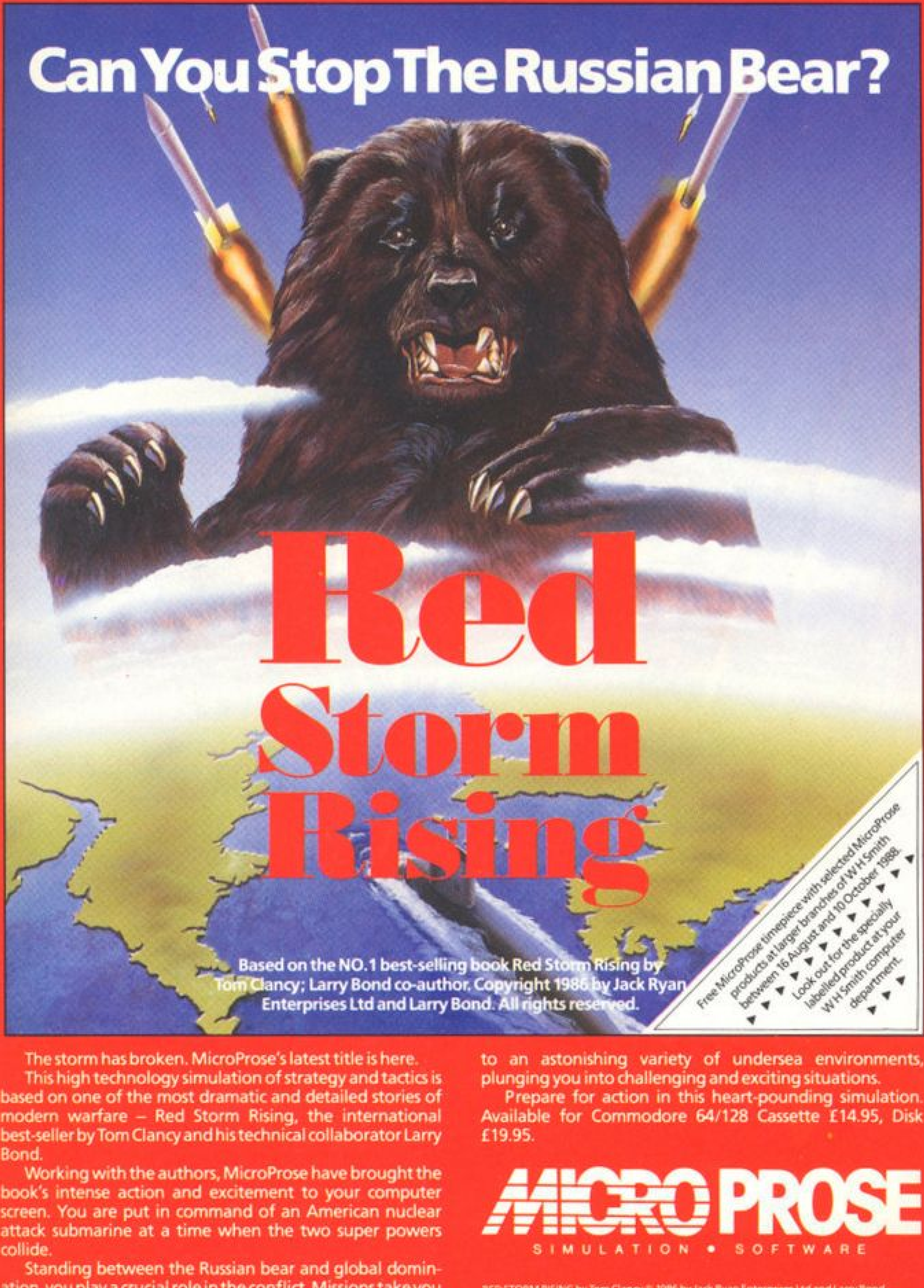
Screen shots from CBM 64/128 ver


Can You Stop The Russian Bear?
Red
Storm
Rising

Based on the NO.1 best-selling book Red Storm Rising by Tom Clancy; Larry Bond co-author. Copyright 1986 by Jack Ryan Enterprises Ltd and Larry Bond. All rights reserved.

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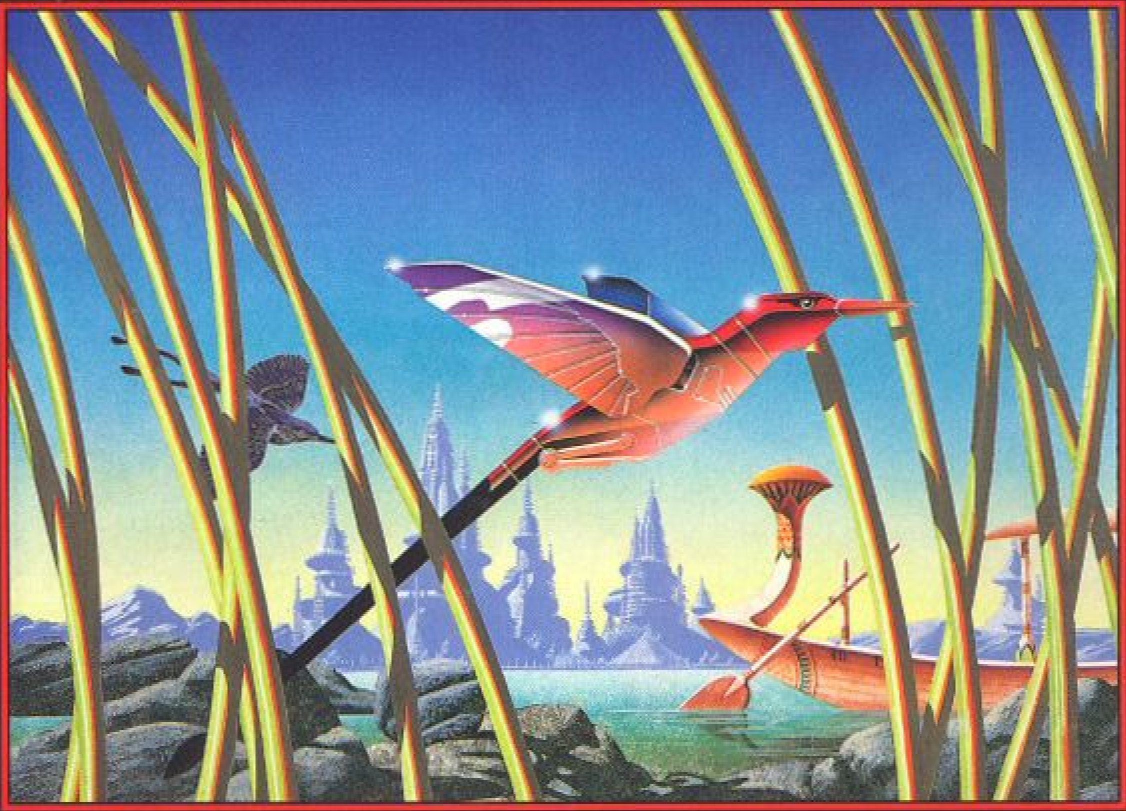
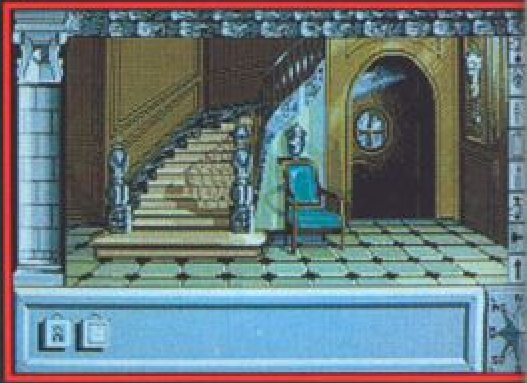
CHRONO QUEST





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Screen Shots are from the ST. version.

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● TARGET
Wait at the start of Level 1 until your time runs out, *then* complete it...

U.M.S.

Rainbird

Atari ST	£24.95dk
IBM PC	£24.95dk
Macintosh	£34.95dk
Amiga	£24.95dk

Reviewed issue 4

Rainbird's *Universal Military Simulator* is designed to simulate a conflict between two forces on a user-definable terrain that can be viewed in three dimensions from any one of eight directions.

The game uses the ST's GEM display well and the variety of options allow the player to have Napoleon fighting Alexander the Great at Gettysburg! Though U.M.S. was heralded as a major breakthrough in 16-bit wargaming, its limitations have since come to light. The game's certainly good for simulating skirmish-type battles, but for larger confrontations the display can often become confusing. That said, it's still a major step towards the sorts of things a larger machine can and should be doing.

● VINTAGE VALUE 907
You can play this for years to come.

● TIPS
Don't make the playing area too large when designing your own scenarios, as this makes things very complicated. Use direction indicators when ordering units – a good method for reminding yourself of earlier orders.

WHERE TIME STOOD STILL

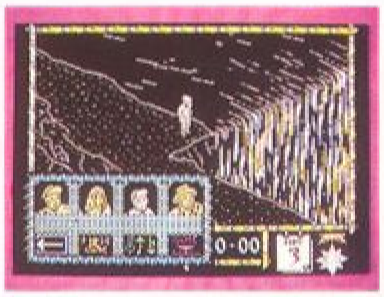
Ocean

Spec 128	£7.95cs	£14.95dk
C64	£8.95cs	£12.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
Atari ST		£19.95dk

Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 719

This arcade adventure takes you back in time and to foreign lands. It's your job to lead the four stranded people off of the Tibetan plateau on which they've crash landed. Playing the game involves the correct use of objects in the correct location. Great gameplay and graphics combine to make an enjoyable arcade adventure.

● VINTAGE VALUE 719
This sort of thing proves there's life in Spectrum yet.



Spectrum Where Time Stood Still – With the other three team-members dead, Dirk's chances of escape look very slim.

● TIPS
Keep the party together and don't pay too much heed to their moaning.

● TARGET
Get off the plateau without losing any team members.

WHIRLIGIG

Firebird

Atari ST		£19.95dk
Amiga		£19.95dk
Spectrum	£7.95cs	£12.95dk
Amstrad	£8.95cs	£14.95dk
C64	£9.95cs	£12.95dk

Reviewed issue 11 – Original ACE Rating 868

This mouse controlled shoot-em-up gives you 4,000,000,000 locations to search! The game revolves around finding six locations amongst the 4 billion. Finding them is not so tough because you know which ones you're aiming for before you start. Getting to them, though, can be tricky because you have to avoid being shot by the enemy craft and you have to ensure you don't run out of fuel.

● VINTAGE VALUE 868
Top rate stuff.

● TIPS
Chaff bombs save your life – use them.

● TARGET
Finish it.

XENON

Melbourne House

Atari ST	£19.99dk
Amiga	£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 869

A true arcade quality vertically scrolling shoot-em-up. You control a craft that can change from a buggy to a plane and back again at the waggle of a joystick. There are five difficult stages in the game to survive, loads of extra weapons to pick up and some tough end of level guardians to defeat. A special version of the game has appeared on children's saturday morning T.V. as an elimination test in Get Fresh's Get Mucky slot (a person from each of the red and blue teams try to out score each other, the winning team then have the joy of seeing a member from the losing team get gooey muck poured over them).

● VINTAGE VALUE 865
It's still one of the best of its kind around.

● TIPS
Stick to the same type of extra weapon, don't pick up a drone then pick up wing cannons, then lose them for another drone. Hang on to whichever type you find best.

● TARGET
Get to the first guardian without flying.

XOR

Logotron

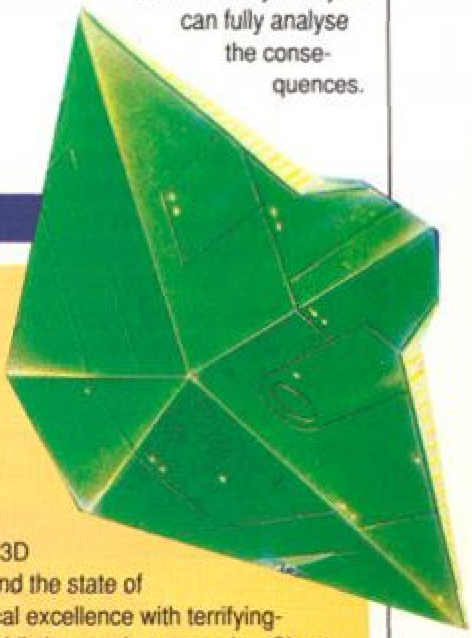
Spectrum	£7.95cs	
C64	£9.95cs	£12.95dk
Amstrad	£9.95cs	£14.95dk
Atari ST		£14.99dk

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 927

Fans of fiendishly involved logical puzzles will be in their element here, with the fifteen graded mazes of this bizarre abstract epic. In their quest to collect the masks of Xor your two explorers, Questor and Magus, face booby-traps including chickens that run sideways, fish that fall down and forcefields that bar your way. Later on teleports, bombs and some rather useful dollies can combine to form dazzling set-pieces. It's tough, obsessive, wonderful stuff.

● VINTAGE VALUE 927
Timelessly enthralling.

● TIPS
Most of the later problems involve using Questor and Magus together, so try to unite them as soon as possible. When approaching a problem, disturb it as little as possible. Don't remove forcefields or shunt objects unnecessarily until you can fully analyse the consequences.



ZARCH/VIRUS

Superior and Firebird respectively

Archimedes	£19.95dk
Atari ST	£19.95dk

Reviewed issues 3 and 11 – ACE Ratings 979 and 981

The game that moved the goalposts on 3D graphics a year ago and still looks beyond the state of the art now, this one matches its technical excellence with terrifyingly responsive controls and ferociously addictive combat gameplay. Shoot down the alien seeders and bombers before they pollute your planet completely, blast the twittering pests, and grapple for high-altitude dogfighting position with mutant drones and fighters. If you want a *Defender* for the 1990's, this is it! (NB this doesn't apply to the Spectrum version – see Screen Test Updates for the gen on this.)

● VINTAGE VALUE 980
For a game this good, a year's nothing.

● TIPS
If you're having trouble hitting unmutated drones, try climbing to maximum height and hosing bullets in their general direction. Their rate of fire is so low that they're easily beaten this way – but don't try it with mutants or fighters! If you see a sea monster, shoot it – it's worth 1000 points!

Missiles are best saved for the end of a wave, or for when you're just short of the next 5,000 point barrier. Shooting mutated trees gets you points, and you get points too for anything you collide with – so crash into something rather than get shot down! You'll always get 400 points when you go after a pest, win or lose.

● TARGET
On the ST, anything over 10,000 is a reasonable score – but would-be aces should aim for the fresh landscape at the start of wave 5, and a score of 30,000 points or so.

ADVENTURES 87-88

● **17 of the best text-entry fantasies we've come across since ACE first hit the shelves. More than any other game-genre, adventures hold their own against the test of time. But even here, expect some surprise re-valuations as programs like *Ultima V* and *Dungeon Master* cast their spell over the ratings...**

BARDS TALE II

Electronic Arts

C64/128	**£16.95dk**
AMIGA	**£24.95dk**

Reviewed issue 7 – Original ACE Rating 920

Create characters and plunge off into the dungeons of Skara Brae, doing battle with the ungodly. Cast dozens of spells, find bags of treasure, and map miles of hostile corridors and streets. Fun all the way, plus the added interest of developing powerful characters for loading into *Bards Tale III* (see below) and the *Ultima* games.

● VINTAGE VALUE 900

Now overshadowed by its sequel *BTIII* and *Ultima V* (reviewed in this issue), but still a great romp nevertheless.

● TIPS

The key to initial success in this game is to make sure you create characters with high enough attributes. Make sure you have at least two magic users (conjurer and magician), a bard, and a rogue in every party. Don't accept less than 17 in the relevant attribute categories.

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Mediagenic

C64/128	**£24.99dk**
ST/Amiga/PC	**£29.99dk**

First reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 920

A text-only adventure (with a limited amount of on-screen mapping) in which you create a character who then has to recover the fabulous Coconut of Quendor. Typical Infocom humour, spells to cast, and loadsapuzzles make this one the best text-only adventures of recent times.

● VINTAGE VALUE 910

Still superlative, but text-only games are increasingly overshadowed by some of the latest graphical adventures, including *Ultima V* (see this issue) and *Corruption.*

● TIPS

Hang on to valuables and sell them in exchange for spells and weapons. Try a lightning guess at the riddle. Don't venture downstairs unless you're feeling particularly strong.

BORDERZONE

Infocom/Mediagenic

C64/128	**£19.99dk**
IBM PC	**£24.99dk**

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 895

Another Infocom experiment, this time with real-time action. The clock ticks away as you evade the KGB, cross the border, and attempt to halt an assassination. Unusual game design involves seeing the same action through the eyes of three different people. Text only.

● VINTAGE VALUE 825

The originality of the game idea still stands, but the increasing challenge in games such as *Bards Tale III* and compilations like *Time and Magik* now make this game appear to offer too little for too much.

● TIPS

As in all good spy thrillers, make an early visit to the toilet in order to rearrange yourself.

Magnetic Scrolls' reputation has grown steadily since they first released The Pawn for the ST. Corruption should firmly establish them as a Number 1 publisher.

CORRUPTION

Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird

ST/AMIGA	**£24.95dk**
IBM PC	**£24.95dk**
SPEC	**£15.95dk**
MAC	**£34.95dk**
C64/128	**£17.95dk**
CPC6128	**£19.95dk**

Reviewed issue 11 – Original ACE Rating 920

Interactive text/graphics adventure with excellent pics and an up-to-date scenario in which you must trap crooked stockbrokers and save yourself from jail. The game isn't in fact too difficult once you get into it and the game appears to demand more brainpower than is, in fact, the case.

● VINTAGE VALUE 920

Still fresh from its recent release, nothing has appeared yet to force a rejudgement.

● TIPS

First thing to do is work out a timetable of other characters activities, which is best done by FOLLOWing them. Then you can get down to some of your own – try pinching the key from your partner's secretary's desk to start with.

BARDS TALE III

Electronic Arts

C64/128	**£14.95dk**

Reviewed issue 12 Original ACE rating 920

Superlative development of the *Bards Tale* series featuring vast map and numerous sub-challenges. Skara Brae is in ruins and you must penetrate the dungeons below its surface to put things to rights. Still not much brain required, but great fun and long-term interest in creating your characters.

● VINTAGE VALUE 920

A recent release that will take a very long time to age to the point of undesirability.

● TIPS

Find Skara Brae and spend at least a day wandering round the town getting as much battle experience and gold as possible. Locate the review board and advance your characters whenever you can. Make sure you find some gems to restore magic user power. Then head for the mad god's temple...

DEJA VU

Mindscape/Mirrorsoft

C64/128	£14.95dk
ST/AMIGA	£24.95dk
Mac	£29.95dk

Reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 819

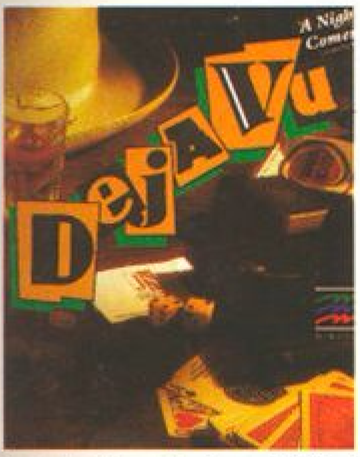
Despite its age, this game achieved prominence this year by emerging for an 8-bit micro, the C64. Using the same icon- driven as *Shadowgate*, it puts the player in a room with a dead body. Scram before the cops bust you. An excellent detective scenario that's lots of fun.

● VINTAGE VALUE 819

Holds its own through sheer enjoyment, and no-one's come up with a better icon-driven adventure system yet.

● TIPS

As with *Shadowgate*, methodically OPERATE everything on everything. Some objects have unforeseen applications which you'll only discover by applying this method rigorously.



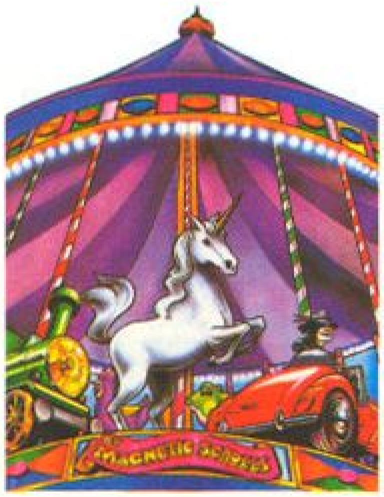
Icom's icon-driven adventures established a new level of quality for text-and-graphics games. The maps may be small, but the gameplay's slick and enjoyable.

JINXTER

Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird

C64/128	£19.95dk
IBM PC	19.95dk
ST/AMIGA	£24.95dk
CPC6128	£19.95dk
SPECT+3	£15.95dk

First reviewed issue 5 – Original ACE Rating 916



Odd adventure decorated with beautiful graphics in which you have to restore luck to Aquitania. Typical of a breed of games where programming techniques overtook game design and writing style, but still worth tackling for adventurers and boasting some excellent pics.

● VINTAGE VALUE 905

Adventure software houses have now more or less finished refining their systems for the new 16-bit generation and are now concentrating more on style and content than parsers/graphics. Recent scenarios like *Corruption* or (to come) *Lancelot* make *Jinxter* look rather quirky and self-indulgent. The essential charm of a game like *Beyond Zork* holds its own better than flashy programming and pretty pictures.

● TIPS

Find the glasses to see in the dark – don't rely on the matches. You can open the mail-box by melting something... If you want to go up in the world while you're down under, try flooding and floating.

GNOME RANGER

Level 9/Rainbird

C64/128	£9.95cs/dk
Spec	£9.95cs
ST/Amiga/PC/Mac	£14.95dk
Ams	£9.95cs £14.95dk

Reviewed issue 3 – Original ACE Rating 915

Level 9's last game with Rainbird before joining new software label Mandarin. Ingrid Bottomlow the not-so-cutesy gnome casts spells and makes friends in her attempts to find her way home. Good graphics, good parser, but rather lukewarm scenario.

● VINTAGE VALUE 815

Although at the time a refreshing change from the complexities of *Knight Orc*, the gnome scenario hasn't aged as gracefully as the *Knight Orc* plot.

● TIPS

Interaction is the key to success. Concentrate on recruiting helpers. In part one, the unicorn and the nymph will fall in love, the eagle will rescue the dog, the dog will find the other dogs, the other dogs will find the unicorn...

KINGS QUEST III

Sierra On-Line/Mediagenic

ST/AMIGA	£24.99dk
Apple Mac	£24.99dk
IBM PC	£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 740

What, only rated 740? What's this one doing here? Answer – it's original low rating has actually INCREASED with age, the reason being that no-one has since succeeded in emulating this graphic adventure style where a small animated character carries out your every command. Seemed too cutesy when released, but since then even cutesier titles (e.g. *Gnome Ranger*) have made *KQIII* look better by comparison...and it is great fun.

● VINTAGE VALUE 895

Has held its own so well that it deserves inclusion, even though the original rating wasn't anything to write home about.

● TIPS

Persevere with the books in the library. Keep sweeping when the Wizard's around!

KNIGHT ORC

Level 9/Rainbird

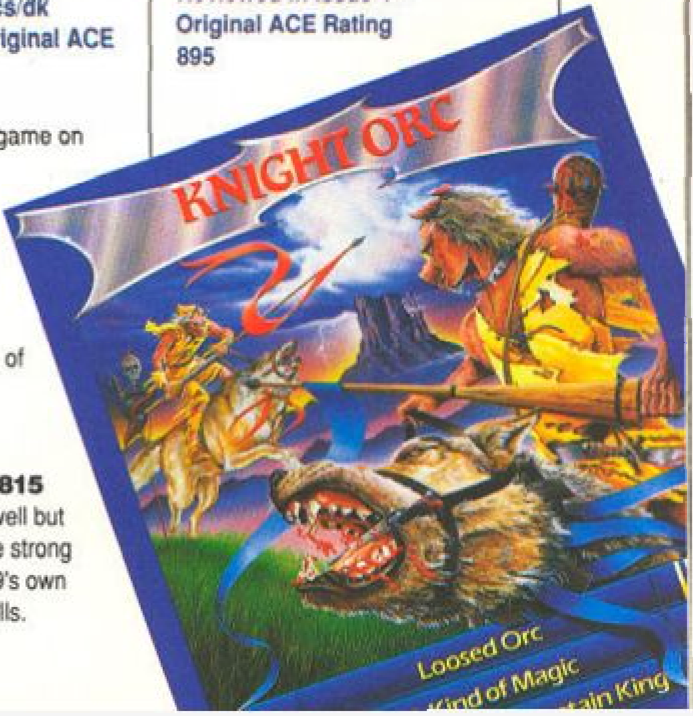
ST/Amiga	£19.95dk
Spectrum	£14.95cs
MSX	£14.95cs
Apple Mac	£19.95dk
IBM PC	£19.95dk
C64/128	£14.95cs/dk
Ams	£14.95cs £19.95dk
Atari 8-bit	£14.95cs/dk

Reviewed issue 1 – Original ACE Rating 905

Level 9 launch the first game on their new system. Interactive characters populate an environment loosely modelled on MUD, in which the player finds himself taking the place of one of the computer-controlled mobiles.

● VINTAGE VALUE 815

Holding up reasonably well but the next year should see strong competition from Level 9's own titles and Magnetic Scrolls.



● TIPS

The first part is easy, provided you can trip up the horseman. Real success comes only once realised the significance of the visor (try removing it and experimenting) and you've acquired the reprogrammer in *Hordes of the Mountain King*. To do this, get yourself killed, then remove visor after opening the door. go east. This will help you recruit the dragon, as well as the troll and the mouse.

LEGEND OF THE SWORD

Rainbird

ST/AMIGA	£24.95dk
IBM PC	£24.95dk

Reviewed issue 11 – Original ACE Rating 815

Very attractive icon-driven adventure that combines text input with excellent graphic presentation. On-screen scrolling map, command menus, movement icons, and other options combine to create a powerful system that supports a competent scenario. Find the legendary sword and defeat the wicked wizard Suzar.

● VINTAGE VALUE 815

Still impresses with the presentation. Expect other similar programs in the near future, which may offer more elaborate scenarios.

● TIPS

Don't be too foolhardy at the beginning of the game, or you won't get very far. If something nasty this way comes, scarper.

NORD AND BERT

Infocom/Mediagenic

C64/128	£24.99dk
ST/AMIGA/PC	£29.99dk

Reviewed in issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 895

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the Death Valley Trek or the Baja challenge. Snow, ice, mud and
desert all combine to make Off-Road Racing the most hazardous
road game yet. It makes the Grand Prix look like child's play.

Another Infocom experiment, but this time definitely for fans of puns and puzzles, not orcs and dragons. The town of Punster is in confusion and you must sort it out by entering a series of mini-scenarios which can only be solved by entering puns and other word-play responses. Some of the scenarios are spoilt by their dependence on American humour, others are hilarious. All are difficult.

VINTAGE VALUE 895

No-one's tried to do anything like this since. If it were a little more British, by Jove, it would be up in the nine-hundreds for text-input puzzle fans.

TIPS

Perseverance is all in this game. Easiest scenarios to tackle are the Bob Hope rip-off, Act the Part and Eat Your Words. Try eating humble pie and putting the lampshade on your head. Anything for a laugh...

PLUNDERED HEARTS

Infocom/Mediagenic

C64/128	£24.99dk
ST/AMIGA/PC	£29.99dk

Reviewed issue 4 – Original ACE Rating 905

Infocom's experiment with romantic fiction makes a fine, if rather easy, text-only adventure. Captured by an evil pirate, can you resist his charms? The goodies are baddies and the baddies are goodies as you abandon ship and rescue your kidnapped father. Excellent descriptions.

VINTAGE VALUE 905

The atmosphere is everlasting, and so's the ease with which you'll finish it.

TIPS

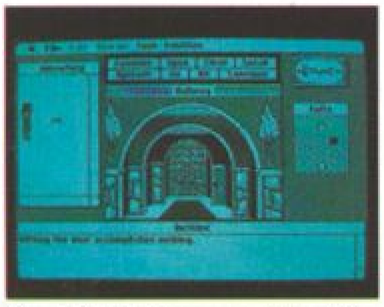
Make sure you put out the fuse in the hold (try chucking something wet at it). Then it's plain sailing till Lafond traps you in his bedroom. Blow something in his face.

SHADOWGATE

Mindscape/Mirrorsoft

ST/Amiga/PC	£24.99dk
Apple Mac	£29.95dk

Reviewed issue 5 Original ACE rating 898



One of the later Icom games – although the system hasn't developed enormously, it remains impressive, and the atmosphere's tremendous.

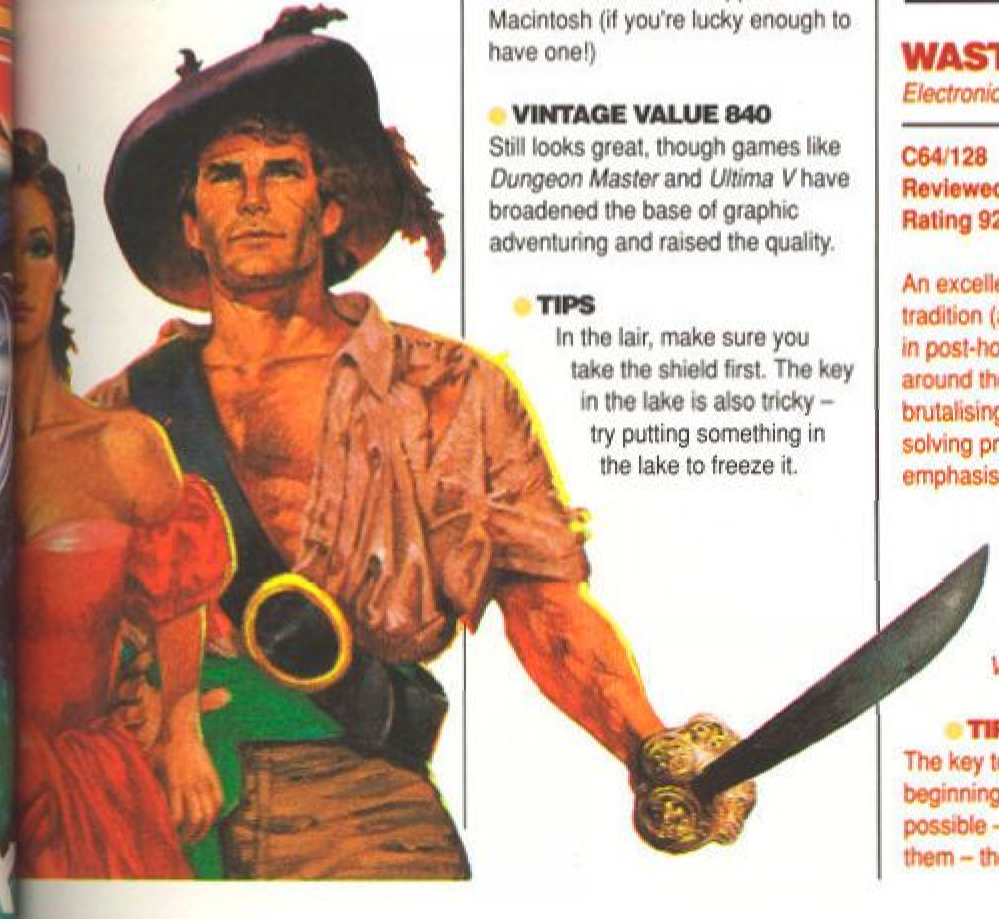
Excellent icon-driven adventure system with good graphics and clever puzzles. Manages to combine the atmosphere of an adventure with the ease of use of an arcade game as you penetrate a haunted house. Particularly recommended on the Apple Macintosh (if you're lucky enough to have one!)

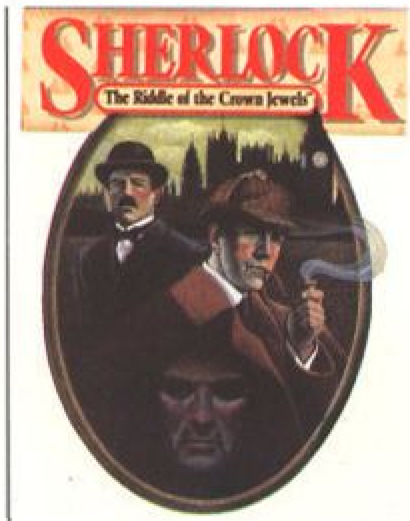
VINTAGE VALUE 840

Still looks great, though games like *Dungeon Master* and *Ultima V* have broadened the base of graphic adventuring and raised the quality.

TIPS

In the lair, make sure you take the shield first. The key in the lake is also tricky – try putting something in the lake to freeze it.




SHERLOCK
The Riddle of the Crown Jewels

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Infocom/Mediagenic

C64/128	£19.99dk
IBM PC	£24.99dk
ST/AMIGA	£24.99dk

Reviewed issue 8 – Original ACE Rating 899

Wander around Victorian London locating the crown jewels, stolen and distributed about the city. Start off on Saturday morning and complete the quest by Monday. Game time passes fairly slowly and some of the puzzles are very easy, but the atmosphere just about wins through and there are one or two real posers to baffle even the best detectives.

VINTAGE VALUE 715

Hit very badly by the enormous improvement in the last year of British adventures and American RPG software. Games like *Corruption* and *Bards Tale III* combine to lower this products rating dramatically.

TIPS

Make sure you revive the girl with the right medicine – get it from Holmes' flat. You can get up Big Ben by plugging your ears.

TIME AND MAGIK

Level 9/Mandarin

SPEC	£14.95cs/dk
C64/128	£14.95cs/dk
AMS	£14.95cs/dk
ST/AMIGA	£19.99dk
IBM PC	£19.99dk

Reviewed issue 10 – Original ACE Rating 919

A superb value compilation of three classic Level 9 adventure games complete with upgraded parsers and improved/added graphics. The time-honoured gem, *Lords of Time*, plus *Red Moon* and *The Price of Magik*. Excellent value.

VINTAGE VALUE 919

timeless.

TIPS

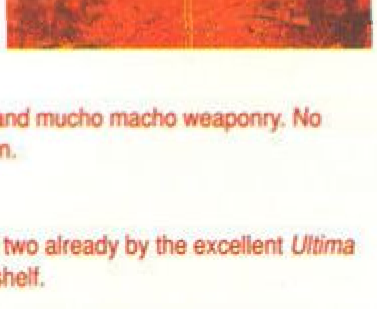
Lords of Time is the one to match yourself against. The key puzzle here is getting the keys from the garden shed. You'll have to reflect on the Narcissus, then wave the lodestone by the door. Don't forget to pay the tooth-fairy, but you won't see her unless you change your diet.

WASTELAND

Electronic Arts

C64/128	£14.95dk

Reviewed issue 12 – Original ACE Rating 921



An excellent RPG in the *Bards Tale* tradition (and by the same team) set in post-holocaust America. Tally-ho around the irradiated countryside brutalising mutant bunnies and solving problems en route. Heavy emphasis on developing powerful characters with lots of skills and mucho macho weaponry. No brains required, but lots of fun.

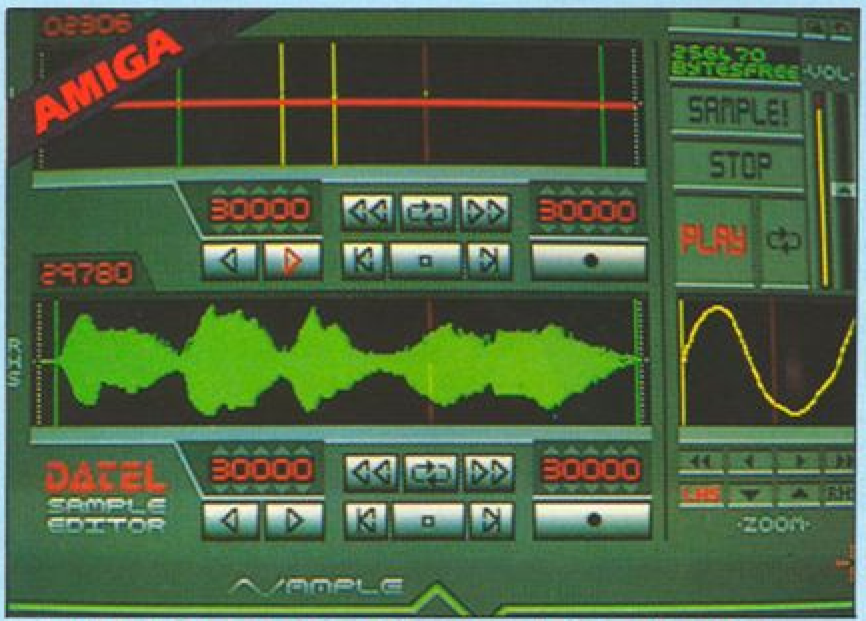
VINTAGE VALUE 915

has been taken down a peg or two already by the excellent *Ultima V*, but still definitely one for the shelf.

TIPS

The key to success is choosing a proper spread of skills for your party at the beginning. Make sure you include as many medics and lock-breakers as possible – you'll need them. If someone asks for help during the game, help them – they will further your quest as a result.

DATEL ELECTRONICS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SAMPLE

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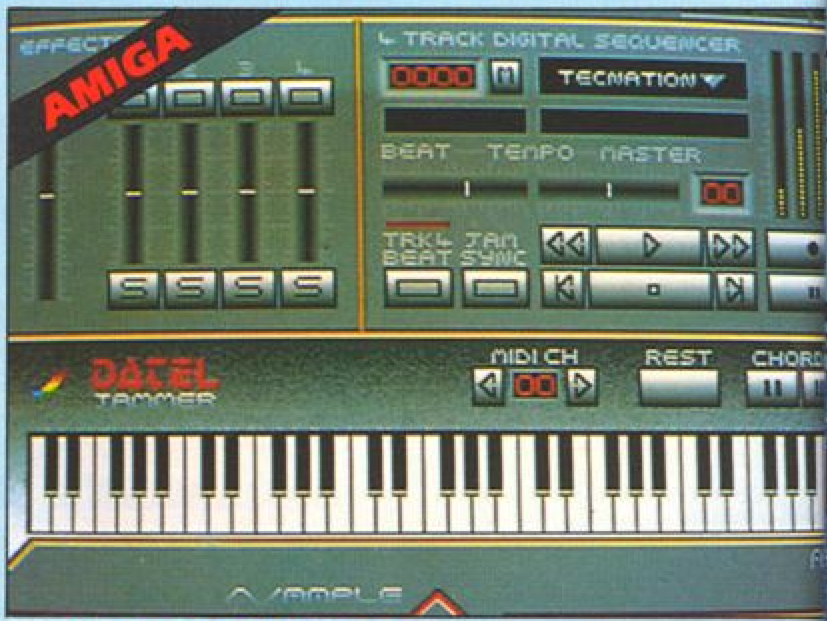
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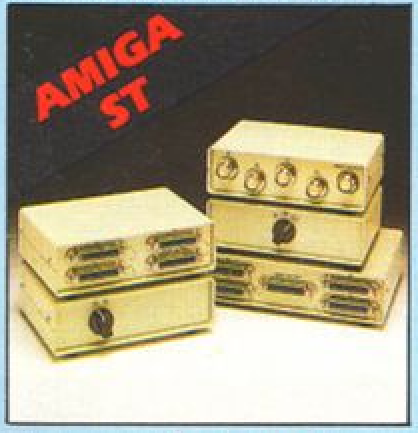

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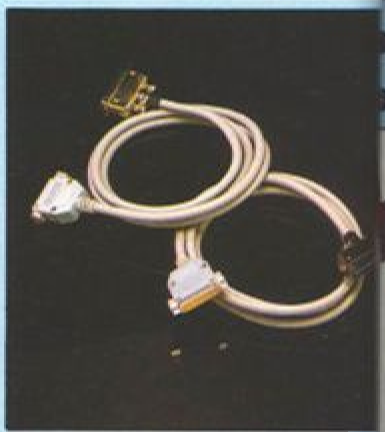

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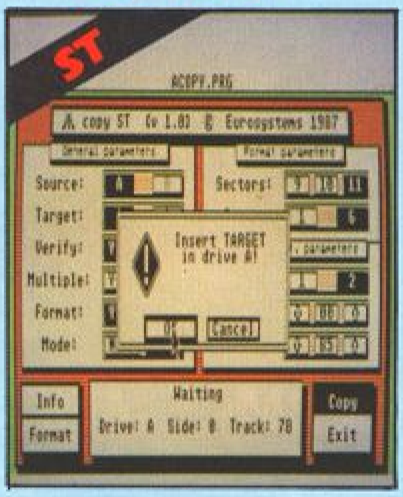
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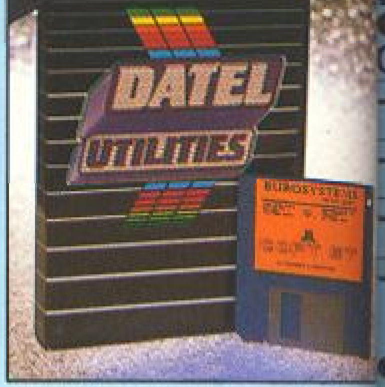
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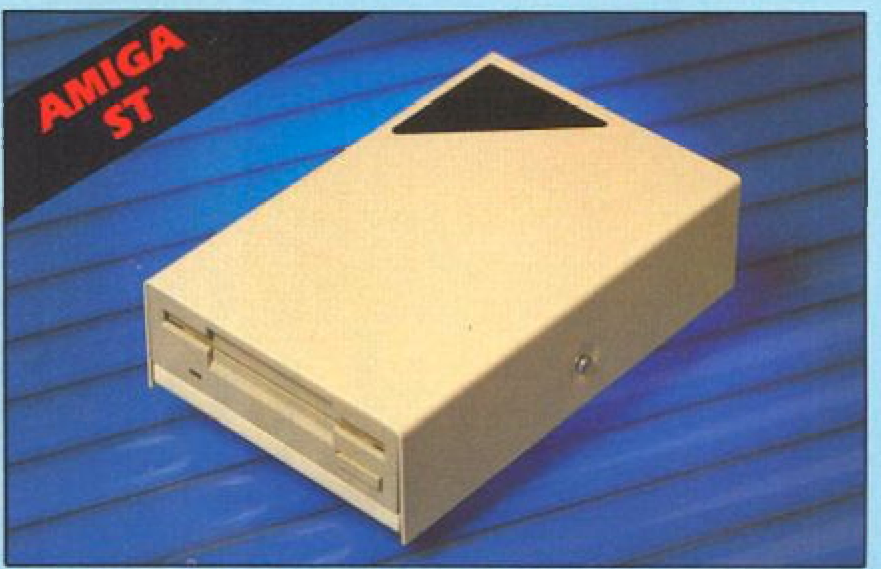

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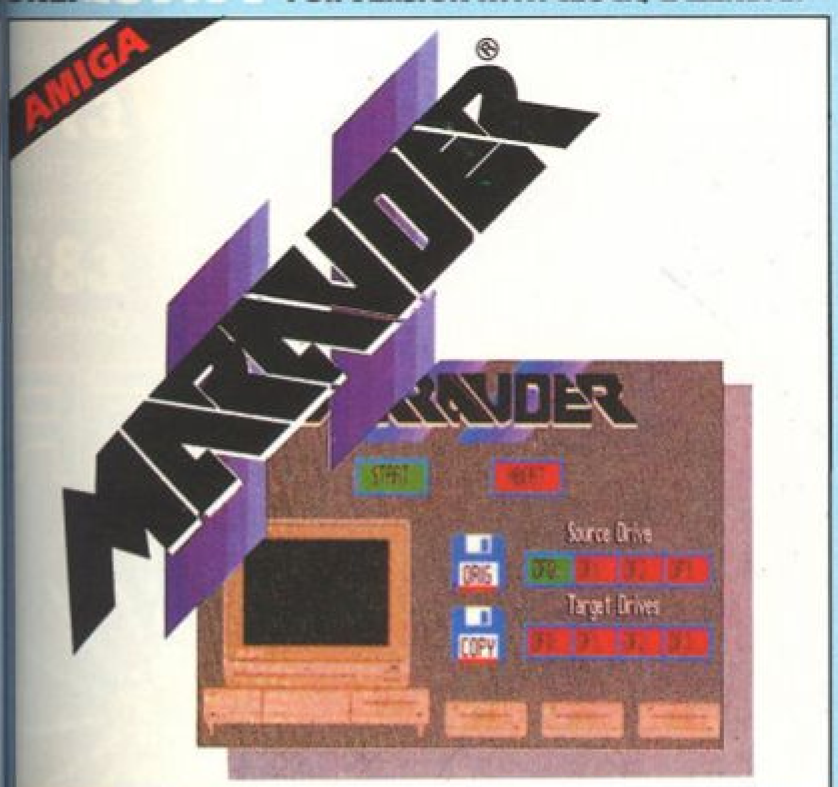

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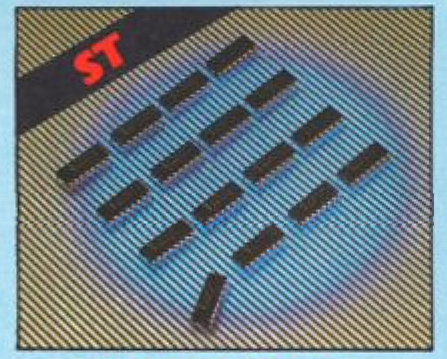

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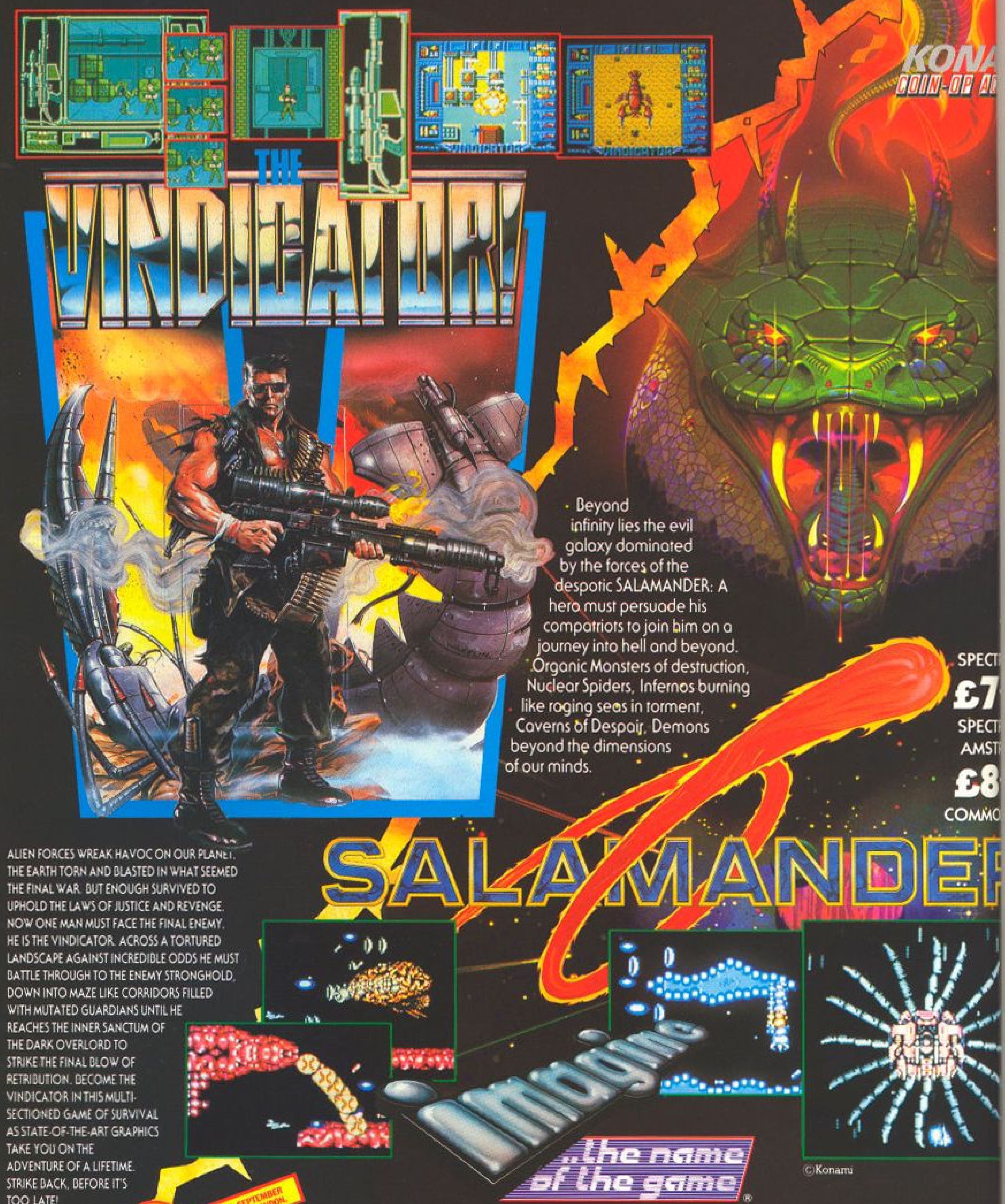
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SCREEN TEST

Solid 3D is making the news again with the impressive appearance of **Starglider 2**. Gone are the vector graphics of the original game and in comes lots of solid colour. It also takes you both above and below the planet surface, boldly going where no Starglider has gone before.

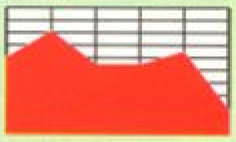
Eliminator is the latest blockbuster from John Phillips, following in the footsteps of *Impossaball* and *Nebulus*. No more tower twisting though, it's a thrilling ride down a winding road in the face of massive alien forces.

Barbarian II takes gory hack-em-ups into new realms of bloodiness, while **Overlander** hots up the battle of the roads in response to *Roadblasters* and *Fire and Forget* last month. The tarmac gets a hefty pounding from **Super Hang-On** as well – has *Out Run* met its match?

THE RATINGS

HOW they're calculated...

If you buy a game, how much enjoyment will you get out of it, and for how long? Just check out our revolutionary PIC (Predicted Interest Curve) for the full story. Brilliant arcade games start high on the curve, and then steadily tail off as you lose interest; powerful puzzle games may ride the crest of the curve for months – but the moment you solve them they'll come tumbling down; complex strategy games may stump you at first – but climb up the scale as you begin to appreciate the scope of the gameplay. And as for the turkeys – they start low, stay low, and have nowhere to go but down, down, down.



Once you've seen how long the game can hold your attention, all you need to glance at is the renowned ACE RATING. This is calculated according to the area under the PIC. The bigger it is, the better the game. Add to that our definitive ratings for IQ Factor (will it give your brain cells a work-out?) and Fun Factor – a measure of instant appeal and exhilaration as you dive into the game. And, of course, we rate the Graphics and Audio effects too...for EVERY machine the game's available on.

999
ACE RATED

WHY you can rely on them...

The ACE reviewing team covers a broad spectrum of computer entertainment talent. Andy Wilton – ACE's resident technical wizz – is as handy with a smart bomb as he is with hexadecimal. Andy Smith wouldn't know hexadecimal from a hole in the ground, but can wipe the floor with any number of aliens. Rod Lawton prefers to reason with aliens – *then* shoot them. Bob Wade (ex-Personal Computer Games, Zzap!64 and Amstrad Action) has played more computer games than any sane person ought to. Add Steve Cooke (ex-PCG and formerly columnist for magazines ranging from Zzap!64 to Your Sinclair) and you've got age and experience as well as youthful enthusiasm.

Every game on the following pages has been seen by all of us. We compare notes, express differing opinions, and only then do we decide who's to take final responsibility for getting our views into print. What follows, then, isn't just a collection of casual comments, but the definitive ACE verdict on this month's software. We've checked it out – now you can too.

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STARGLIDER 2

RAINBIRD battle the Egrons again

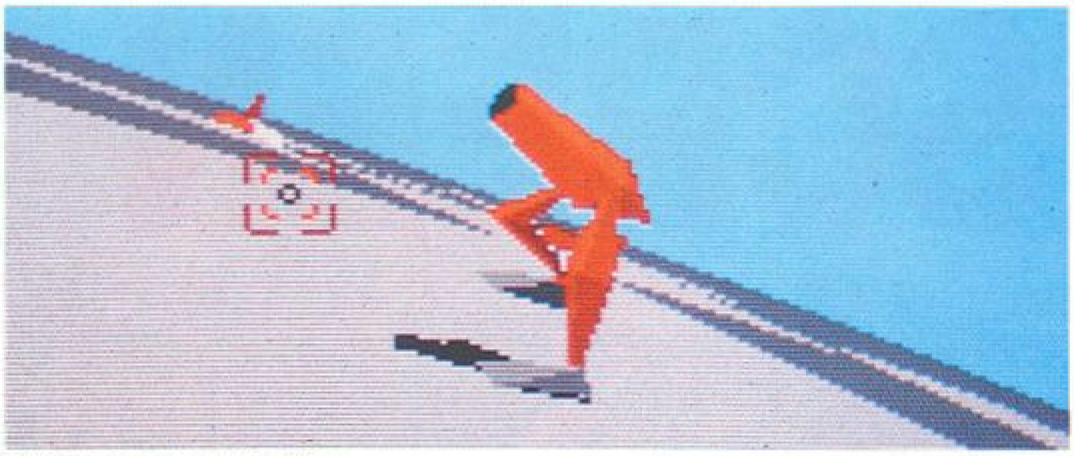
NOVENIA is under threat again from those pesky Egrons. They've hatched another dastardly plot to destroy the planet. The story is related in another novella by James Follett, but this time it's a lot more humourous – the Egrons being totally incompetent. Unfortunately, it's only in the novella that the Egrons are obligingly stupid – in the game they're a much nastier prospect.

Everything takes place in the Solice star system, which consists of five planets, some with moons. You begin on the planet Apogee. The planet surfaces are chequerboards – each planet being a different colour. The view operates in a similar way to *Virus* – not stretching away to the horizon but maintaining a limited view around the ship. Thrusting away from the surface will eventually take you clear of the planet's atmosphere. You can now see a starfield, the rest of the planets, moons and the sun.

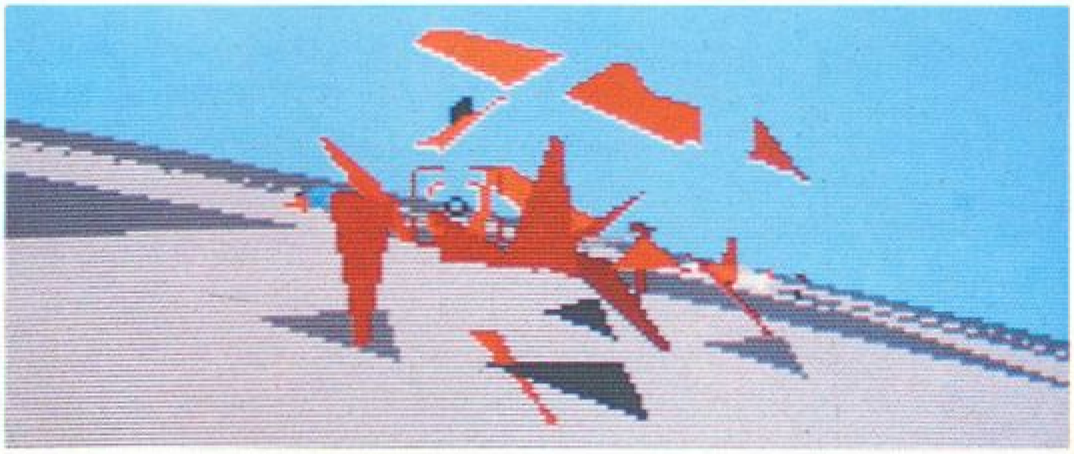
To travel between planets you need to use the stardrive. As well as moving you at high speed this also avoids the attentions of space pirates, but drains your fuel quickly.

One planet in the system, Millway, has seven moons on which are being constructed projector bases. These are to defend the space station which will destroy Novenia. You have to make a Neutron bomb before the Egrons can build the space station. To build the bomb you're going to need objects from all the planets and moons, to be assembled on Apogee.

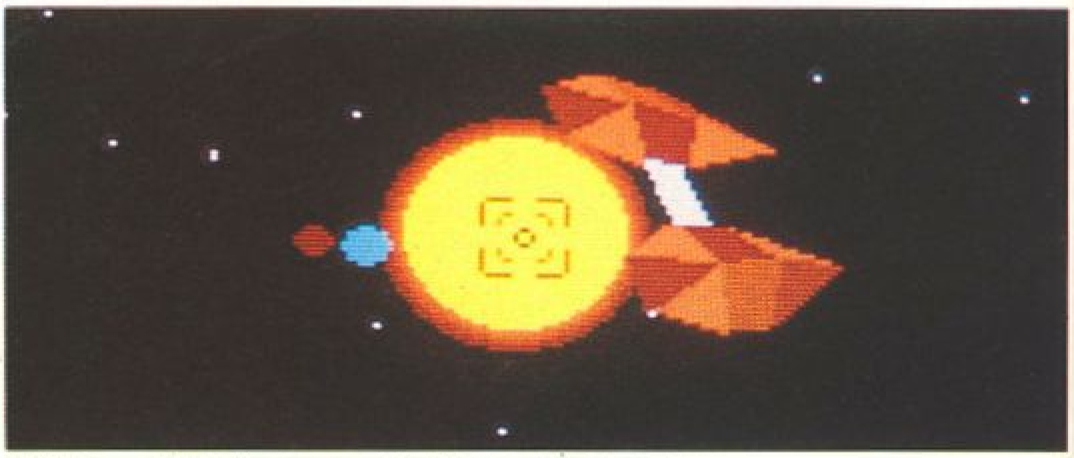
The objects are fairly strange, and include an asteroid, a crate of Vistan wine, Castrobars, an Egron mini rocket and – most crucially of all – the Professor, who knows how to put the bomb together. Most objects are found on the planet surfaces, but some are out in deep space or have to



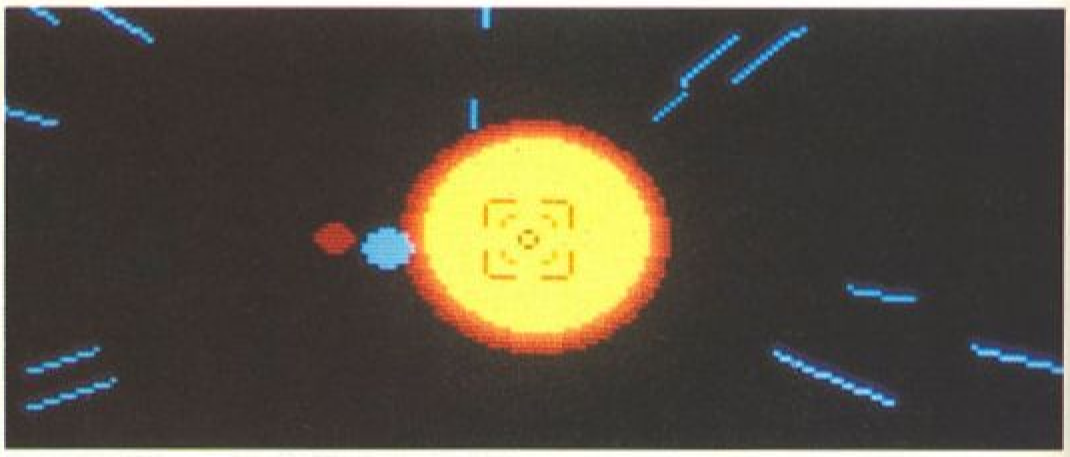
BEFORE: a stomper looms in front of you.



AFTER: a few blasts of laser fire and he's history.



BEFORE: a space pirate flashes across your view of the sun and two distant planets.



AFTER: stardrive is engaged, leaving the pirates far behind.

ATARI ST VERSION

It's faster than the Amiga version, but curiously this doesn't actually improve the gameplay. The sound effects are OK but don't give it the same feel as on the Amiga. Graphically there's hardly any difference at all.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 927

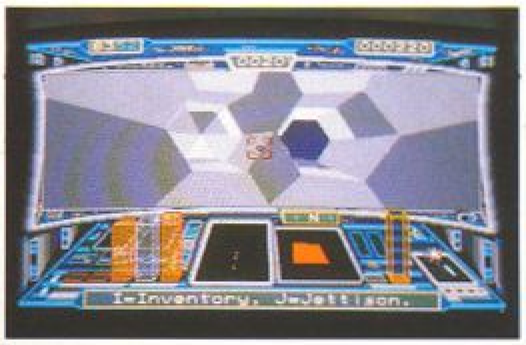
AMIGA VERSION

Has the best sound effects, which really add a lot to the feel of the game. The 3D filled in graphics are excellent too.

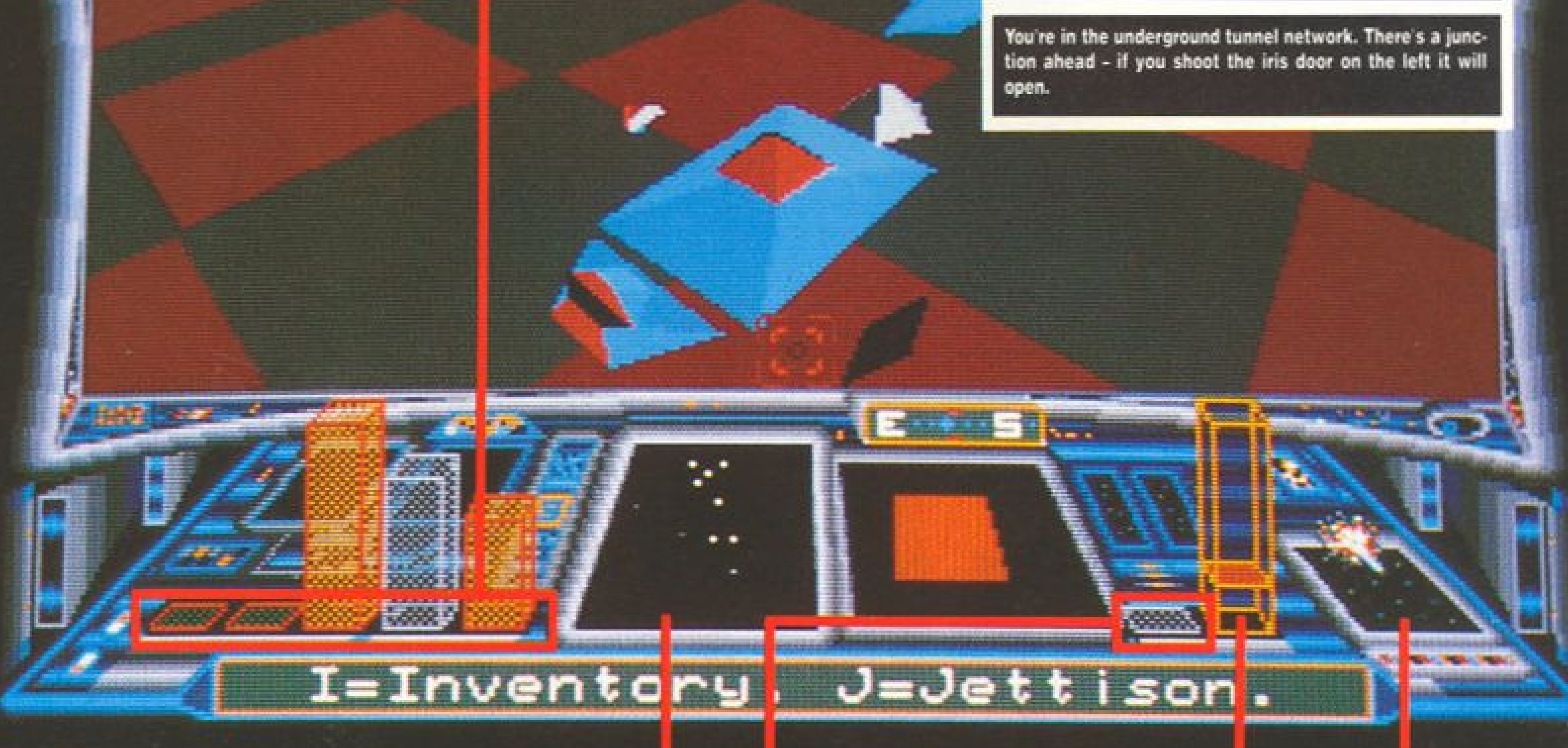
GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 927

A completed Egron projector base. It can be destroyed with a bouncing bomb. If all 7 are completed work on the space station begins.



You're in the underground tunnel network. There's a junction ahead – if you shoot the iris door on the left it will open.



These 3D gauges show the number of bouncing bombs, missiles and amounts of laser ammo, shield and fuel.

This radar screen shows most land objects, plus the moons and planets when you're in space.

Speed indicator.

Height gauge.

This is the currently selected weapon.

be exchanged for at supply depots.

The depots are located in underground tunnel networks found on some of the planets. They are entered by flying into surface portals, and once inside the ship is safe from any Egron attack. The maze of tunnels isn't too hard to find your way around after a while because the tunnels follow fairly standard patterns. You'll encounter iris doors, energy barriers and junctions, but nothing that can do you much harm.

The hangars in which you can exchange items can also contain weapon supplies. Initially you're armed with just a laser but can pick up missiles, bouncing bombs, energy cuboids and the neutron bomb. They vary in usefulness and effect, the most important being the bouncing bombs, with which you can take out projector bases, and the neutron bomb, which destroys the space station.

Each planet surface has different types of defences and features. You'll encounter Egron defences virtually everywhere, but the level of opposition varies greatly from planet to planet. There are even weird mechanical beasts like Pac-worms, space whales and Egron ducks.

Players of the original game will recognise most of the defences – gun turrets, walkers, stompers, tanks and all manner of flying craft, but they all look infinitely better with filled in graphics.

As you blast around the Solice system there are three important gauges you need to keep an eye on – fuel, shield and lasers. Running out of the first two will prove fatal and the latter will leave you defenceless. The gauges can be replenished by several means – none of them easy. There's flying low and fast over power lines, flying through asteroid debris, sun skimming, and other weird refuelling methods.

The action hangs together extremely well. Unlike the original, it isn't a straightforward shoot-em-up, but a combination of exploration and blasting. Indeed, the action parts tend to take second place to the quest for objects. It's been well thought out and is full of superb touches that raise it out of the ordinary.

● Bob Wade

927
ACE RATED

A split second after your ship has met a grisly end in the high-pressure atmosphere of the planet Millway.

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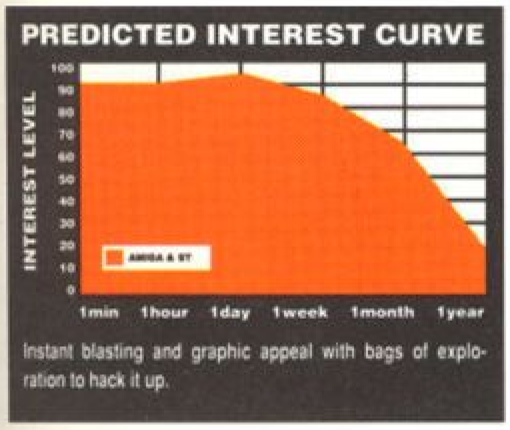
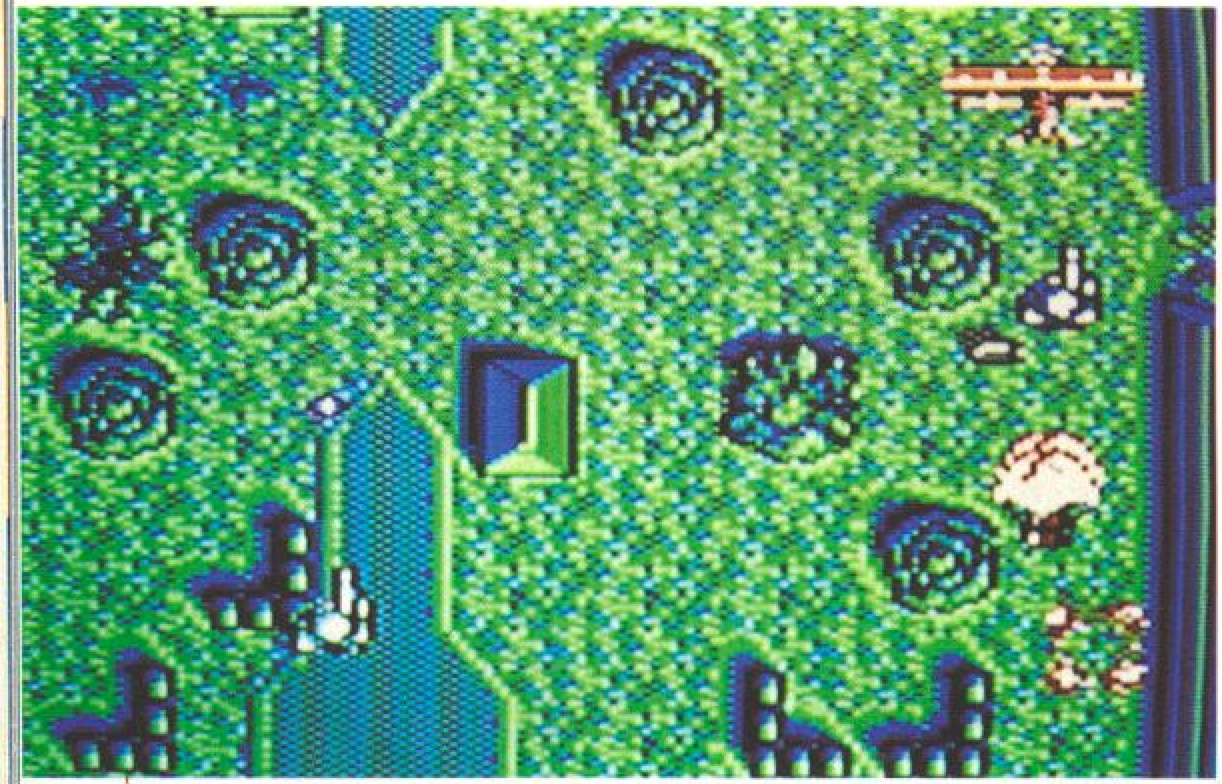
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Instant blasting and graphic appeal with bags of exploration to hack it up.



The overhead view of the action. That's you below the plane, outside one of the side doors (which has already been blown open). Watch out for the bombs the plane's dropping, they can severely damage your health!

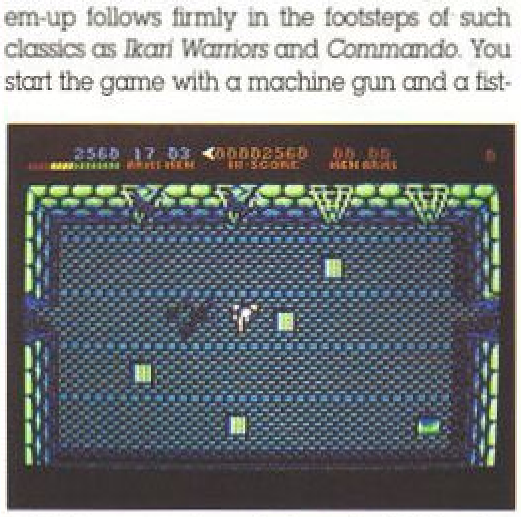
FERNANDEZ MUST DIE

IMAGEWORKS come out guns a-blazing

EL DIABLO state is in uproar. Not only has the democratic government been toppled in a military coup lead by the evil general Fernandez, but he's set himself up as dictator.

Guess who's gonna save the day? Guess who's gonna infiltrate and destroy the eight military bases he's set up to protect his newly captured state? Yup, you.

This viewed from above scrolling shoot-em-up follows firmly in the footsteps of such classics as *Ikari Warriors* and *Commando*. You start the game with a machine gun and a fistful of grenades. You then have to bomb and blast your way through the vertically-scrolling levels hunting out the eight bases you need to destroy before you come face to face with the evil dictator for the final showdown.



Inside the room – you've reached a couple of POWs and as yet there are no enemy guards.

C64 VERSION

The graphics and scrolling are good and the sound's fine. Gameplay's also good and once you've found out how to survive for more than ten minutes you'll find it hard to put down.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	3
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 784

Also to be found on the various levels are side doors that allow access to bunker-like rooms that contain POW's. Lob a grenade at the iron doors that imprison your chums and they're freed – they give you a nice wave to indicate that they can now look after themselves (though they don't seem to be in any particular hurry to leave their cells). Also to be found in the rooms are grenade and gold boxes. Picking up gold doesn't help you survive any longer but you do get extra points, whereas grenades come in handy for destroying the side doors and the larger pieces of hardware that make up Fernandez's army.

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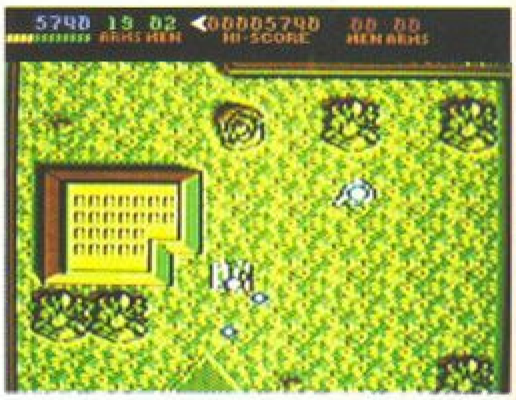
These large pieces of equipment include tanks, motorbikes and trains that fire particularly accurate shots if you're on foot, and which are easier to avoid if you can find yourself some swift transportation. The duty jeeps are the best thing to rely on. Climb in, and you can not only shoot all the enemy soldiers that are running around the bases, but you can also drive over them. Travelling this way's even more fun in two-player mode because both players can get in the jeep. One drives and can fire in the direction the jeep's facing and the other player can fire in any direction. Taking hits reduces your health by varying amounts (getting hit by a tank shell does more damage than a rifle shot, for example) and you only have five lives to complete the game with. Fortunately, aeroplanes make regular passes overhead and frequently drop red cross parcels which help to keep you going. They also drop enemy troops, so you have to be careful when going for the packages.

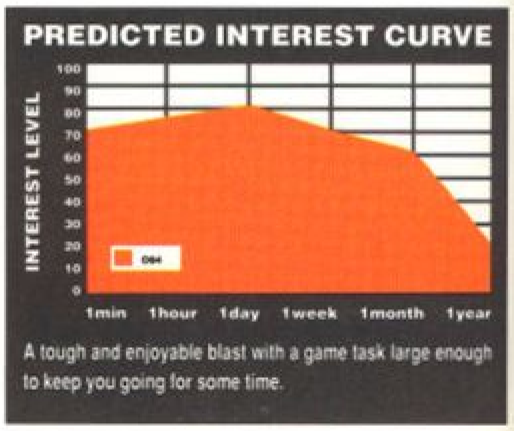
Though we've seen a lot of the Rambo-em-up style of games in recent months, *Fernandez* gives you more to think about than many other shoot-em-ups. The simultaneous two-player mode is nothing new or surprising but the extra touches help to add polish to what's already a tough but enjoyable game.

● Andy Smith



In the jeep outside one of the bases.

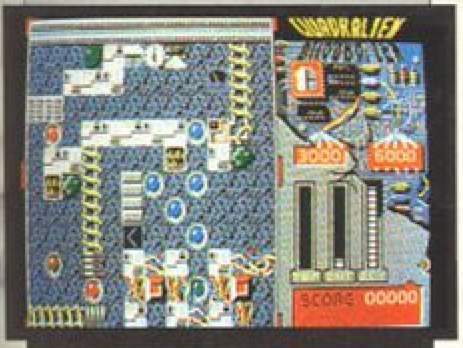
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A tough and enjoyable blast with a game task large enough to keep you going for some time.

The games they said couldn't be written

QUADRALIEN



ST Screen Shot

You are entering Jupiterspace. Your destination, Astra, the vast cybernetic nuclear-fission complex they orbited mid-21st century. Something strange has happened there. Astra has sealed itself off from the outside world, the control mechanisms won't respond, the temperatures rising. Meltdown is nigh. But it's worse than that, for in the very heart of the reactor itself, the sinister QUADRALIEN forces have established their foothold in our solar-system. You have just six droids to sort it out.
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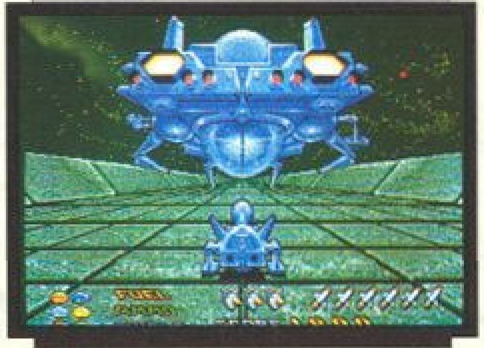
STARGOOSE!



Amiga Screen Shot

What happens when a team that's notched up two 16-BIT number ones decides to tackle the classic theme of the vertical scroll-and-blast ? The result is StarGoose!, the latest from Steve Cain and GP (Kenny) Everett, and boy is it wierd! Until you've tackled the mind-boggling variety of defence forces in the 3-D world of Nom, you're still in Straight City. StarGoose! ingredients include: The beefiest scroll-FULL screen width and Variable speed, Unique relief landscapes, Unique supply tunnels and The Eyes!

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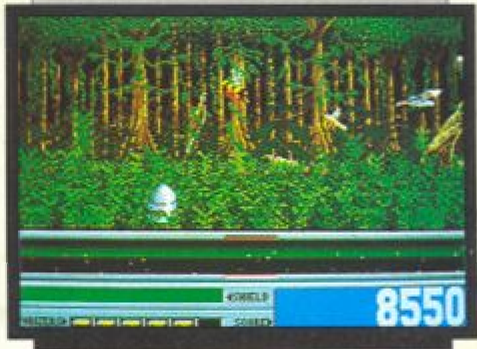

Amiga Screen Shot

We won't mention the super-smooth parallax scrolling...the stunning backdrops...the amazing hi-res graphics...the never-heard-before sounds...the gameplay that turns humans into jelly...the aliens that just get wierder...the unique Last Game Option...
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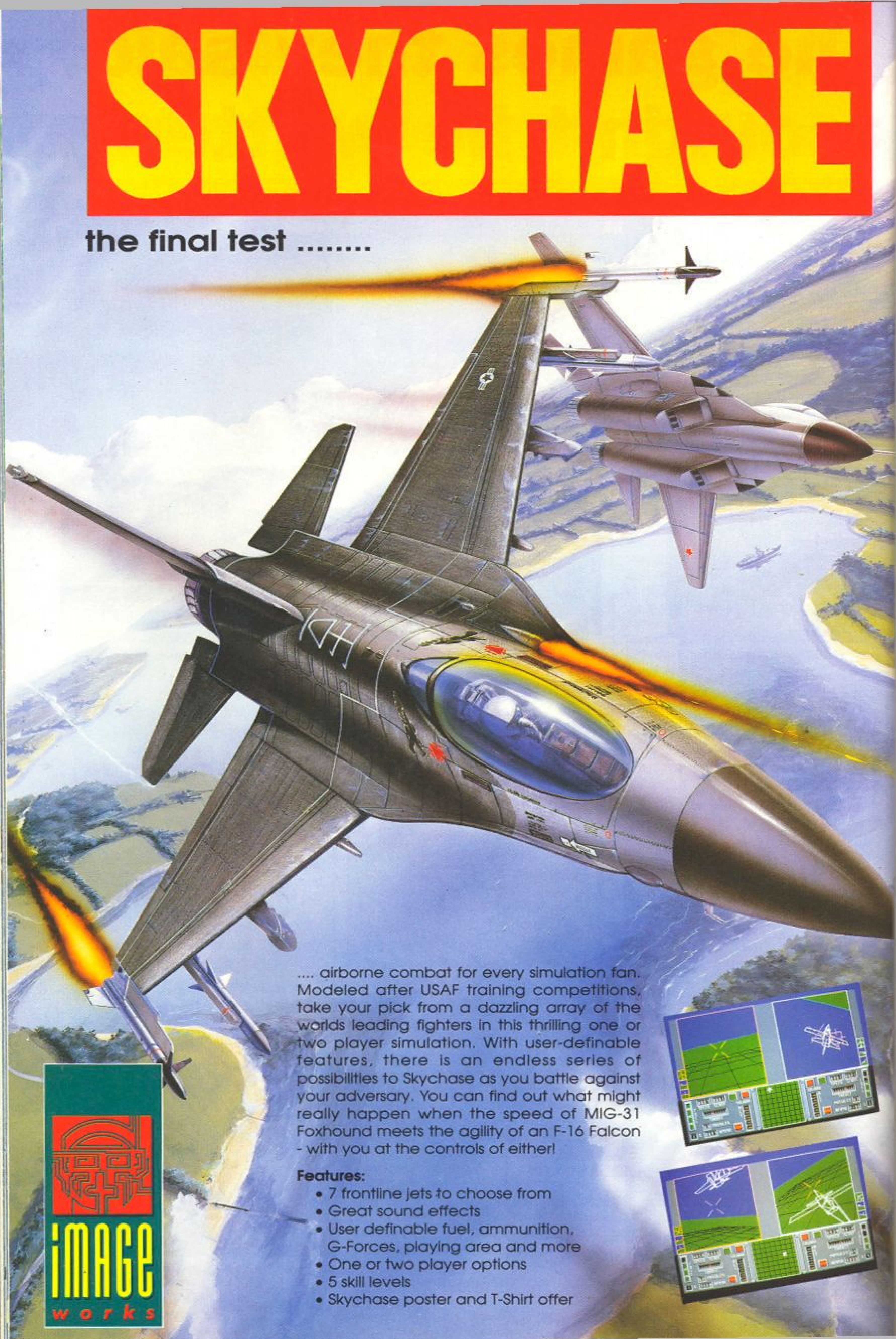

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- 7 frontline jets to choose from
- Great sound effects
- User definable fuel, ammunition, G-Forces, playing area and more
- One or two player options
- 5 skill levels
- Skychase poster and T-Shirt offer

OVERLANDER

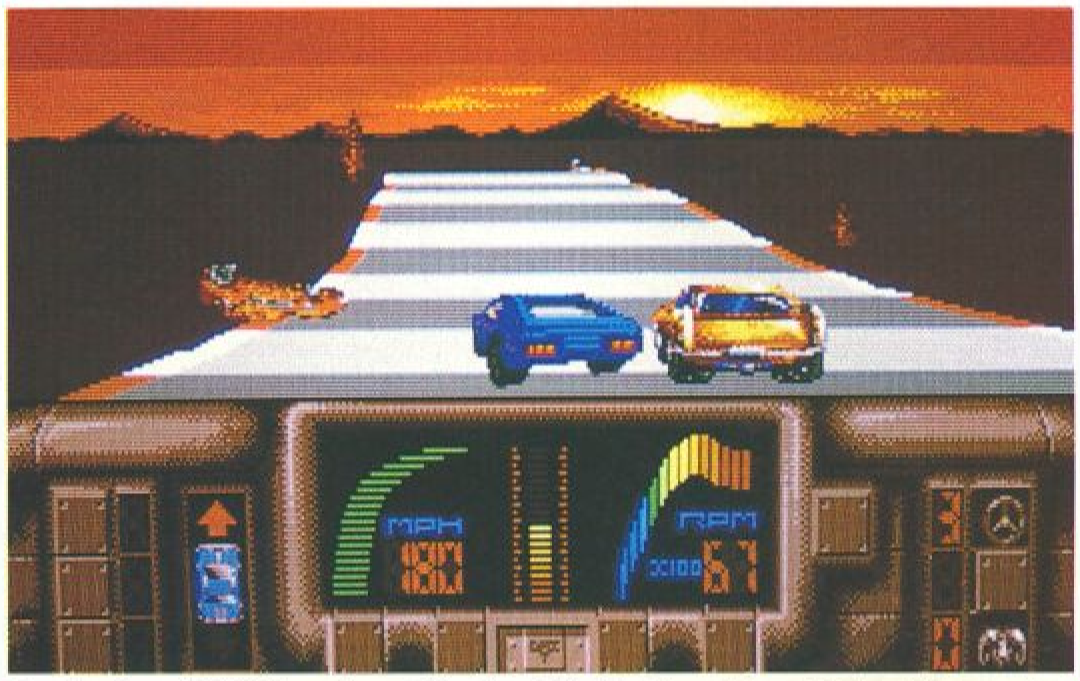
ELITE take the money and drive

DRIVING games are still big news and the competition is getting ever hotter. The latest batch have souped-up cars with weapons and add-on modules. *Roadblasters* came top of the pile last month – so can Elite's game do better?

Your aim, as with most driving games, is to successfully get from A to B. In this case you've got a really good reason for it as well – money. Each mission you go on requires you to carry some sort of cargo – some are just important, others are highly illegal. The more dodgy the cargo, the higher the bounty. You get 50% up front and the rest on delivery.

The reason the cash is important is that you need it for purchasing extra weapons and enhancing the car. This is done before taking a trip, so at the start you won't be able to afford much.

The level of opposition you meet on the road depends on how far through the game you've got and which of the two missions you accepted at the start of the level. The more valuable cargoes naturally prompt tougher journeys.



The upturned car on the left of the road is one of a long line on both sides of the road. As you drive through this narrow alley of lethal wreckage, cars will appear from in front and behind to try to bounce you into them. Fortunately you can do exactly the same to them, or just shoot them with your gun.

The side of the road is littered with rocks and trees that should be avoided at all costs. Apart from that there are six main types of obstacle: overturned cars, barriers, cars, bikes, gun emplacements and trucks. The overturned cars are at the edge of the road, leaving a narrow strip down the middle. The barriers are placed at intervals all over the road. The cars will try to bump you off the road but you can do the same to them, or shoot them. Gun emplacements strafe bullets across the road and come in groups so that you have to weave from side to side. Trucks lob weapons off the back and take several hits before exploding.

The nastiest enemies are the motorbikes, which try to hit your car – causing both vehicles to explode. This devilish kamikaze behaviour is made more dangerous by the fact that they are very manoeuvrable and weave all over the road to confuse you.

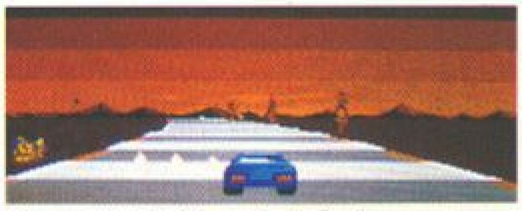
Your forward firing gun is the usual way of dealing with bad guys, but the additional weapons can come in handy. There are flame bombs which catapult forward in a salvo, rockets, smart bombs, wheelblades and battering rams. The improvements you can make to the car are a turbo for faster acceleration, leanburn engine to lower fuel consumption, armour plating, bullet-proofing, better brakes and extra lives.

None of the additions is going to make life too easy but they do help eliminate some problems. Battering rams protect you against the barriers, a leanburn engine allows you to drive slower and not run out of fuel, and bullet-proofing helps you out against the gun emplacements.

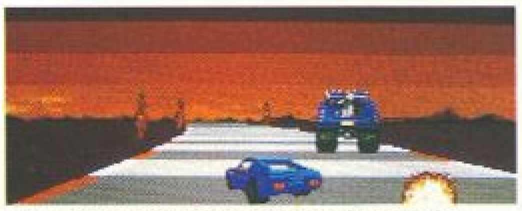
The best thing about the action is the way in which the player has a great deal of freedom in what he does. You can tool up with whatever you can afford and deal with the hazards in a number of ways. For instance you could charge past the gun emplacements at full speed or trundle up to them slowly and shoot them. The more you shoot the better, because you get additional money for wiping out the enemy.

It's the best driving-blasting game of the current batch, combining the undulating twisty roads of *Out Run* with plenty of murderous mayhem. There's a feeling of actually getting somewhere, you can learn the routes, and the action is demanding and gets progressively tougher.

● Bob Wade



The gun at the left of the road is strafing fire across your path. Quick reactions and good timing are needed here.



The guy in the back of the truck is throwing explosive devices at you. One has just gone off to your right.

ATARI ST VERSION

The graphic quality of the moving roadway is similar to that in *Out Run*. The music and effects are also up to scratch but not exactly leading edge. The gameplay is the clincher because it's got instant appeal, lots to learn and plenty of progressive difficulty.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 832

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£7.99cs • £12.99dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £11.99dk	IMMINENT
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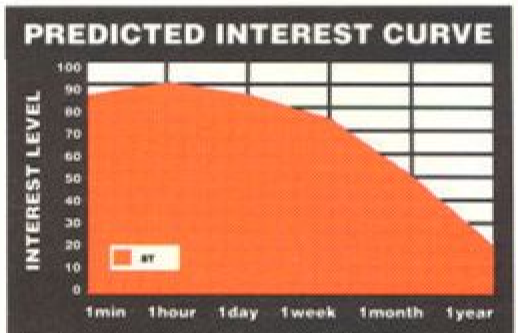
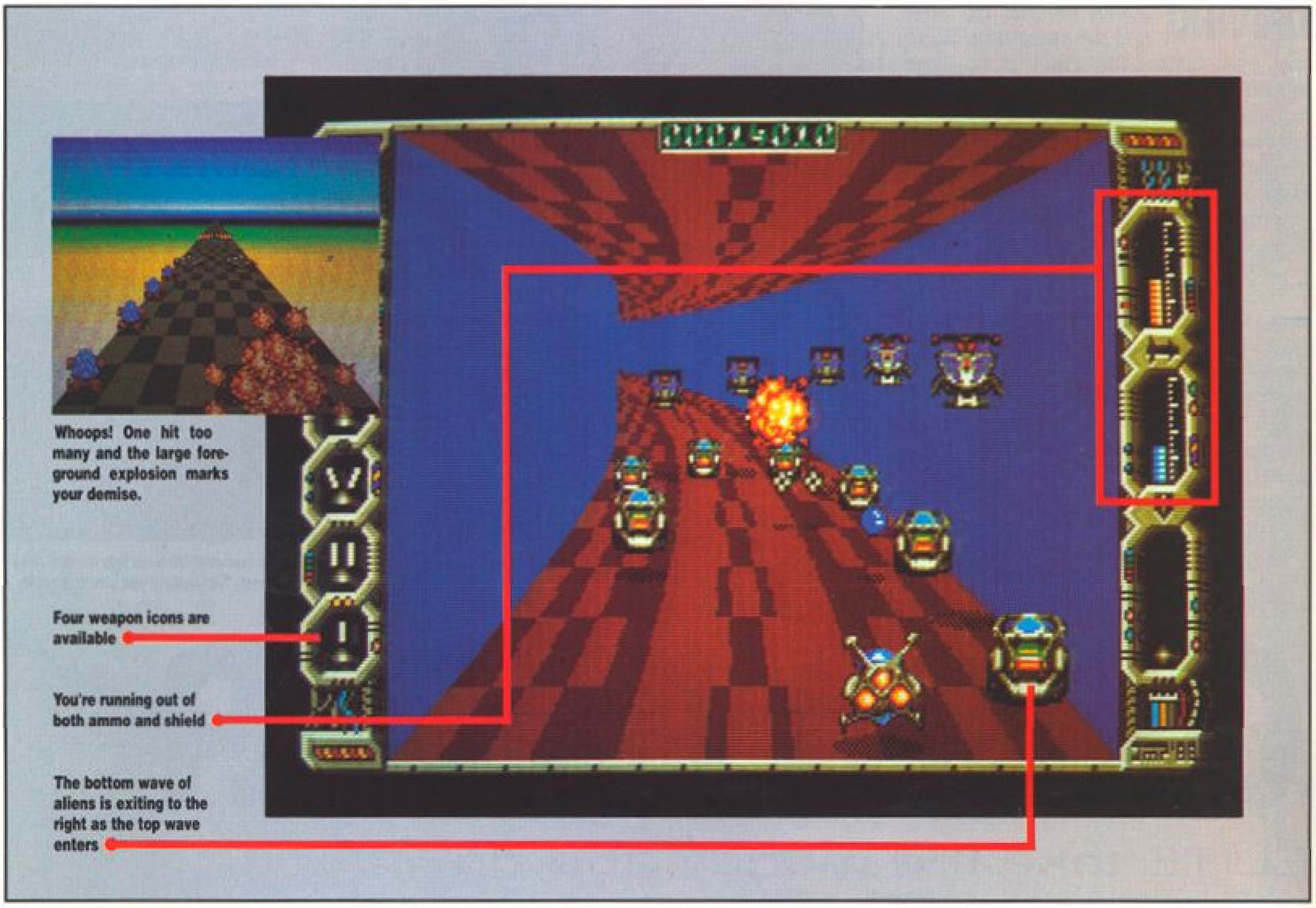
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Route learning and weapon experimentation get you hooked – the increasingly difficult levels keep you coming back.



Whoops! One hit too many and the large foreground explosion marks your demise.

Four weapon icons are available

You're running out of both ammo and shield

The bottom wave of aliens is exiting to the right as the top wave enters

ELIMINATOR

● John Philips the programmer behind *Nebulus* and *Impossaball* now brings us the roadway shoot-em-up *Eliminator*.

JOHN Phillips is the programming genius behind titles like *Impossaball* and *Nebulus*. Now he's turned his attention from rotating platform games to a roadway shoot-em-up.

Ahead of you is a roadway that dips, climbs and curves, throwing up obstacles and enemies every inch of the way. The road travels through many different settings - barren wastelands, tunnels and out into space. It's viewed from an ever-changing perspective - sometimes you'll be able to see a long way ahead and know what's coming at you, while at others you won't know what's on the way until it hits you.

Your craft hovers above the road and travels at a set speed. You just control its left/right movement and firing. This being the case there's no room for error - do the wrong thing and there's no slowing down to correct the mistake. This may be a cause for some frustration but it forces you to learn the levels so that you know what to expect. It's not just trial and error though, because most dangers can be dealt with if you've got your wits about you.

There are two basic types of danger on the road - moving aliens and static obstacles. The aliens come in waves in line astern, moving around the screen like monster snakes. They fire blue spheres at you that damage your shield. If you're careless enough to run into them it's an instant life loss. The shield replenishes itself with time, but not very quickly, so you have to work hard at avoiding the spheres.

Knowing where each wave appears from and disappears to is essential for progress. You can be positioned to wipe them out quickly and know where not to be when they charge off the screen.

The static objects vary in nature and you need to identify them quickly in order to know how to deal with them. There are large barriers across the road with gaps in the middle or sides, sometimes blocked by objects you can shoot. They can also extend all the way across so that you have to use ramps to jump over them. The destructible objects are usually positioned at crucial points

904
ACE RATED

ATARI ST VERSION

The roadway is a delight to watch, giving an excellent impression of movement and producing some wild perspectives. The driving tune that accompanies the action is highly suitable.

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	3
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	9

ACE RATING 904

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£7.99cs • £12.99dk	IMMINENT
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C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT

on the road where you've got to get in position quickly and blast them.

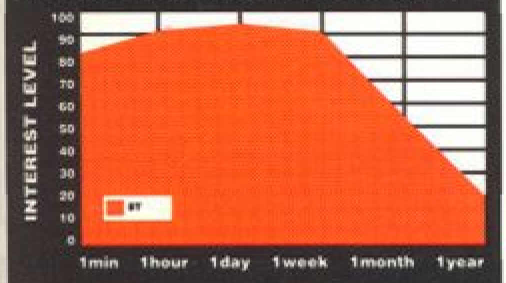
Initially you're armed with a single shot cannon. This can be upgraded by picking up spinning blue pyramids. The five additional weapons are a dual-fire cannon, side-fire cannon, bouncing bombs, double-fire cannon and triple-fire cannon. You only have a limited amount of ammunition – the last two weapons using it up faster than the others. Once the weapon is picked up you can select freely between those available. However, every time you die a weapon is taken away. Ammo is replenished by picking up spinning orange cubes – usually you have to decide whether to go for that or the pyramid because they're on opposite sides of the road. Also watch out for typical John Phillips traps where going for a weapon will prove fatal.

There are lots of delightful touches that highlight this as a John Phillips game. In places you can use a ramp to flip you up onto the ceiling and play upside down – well weird. There's a stage with a river running all the way down the middle of the road, where the only way over it is to use ramps to jump across. There are also passwords which allow you to start further on in the game, saving having to repeat the early levels once you find them too easy.

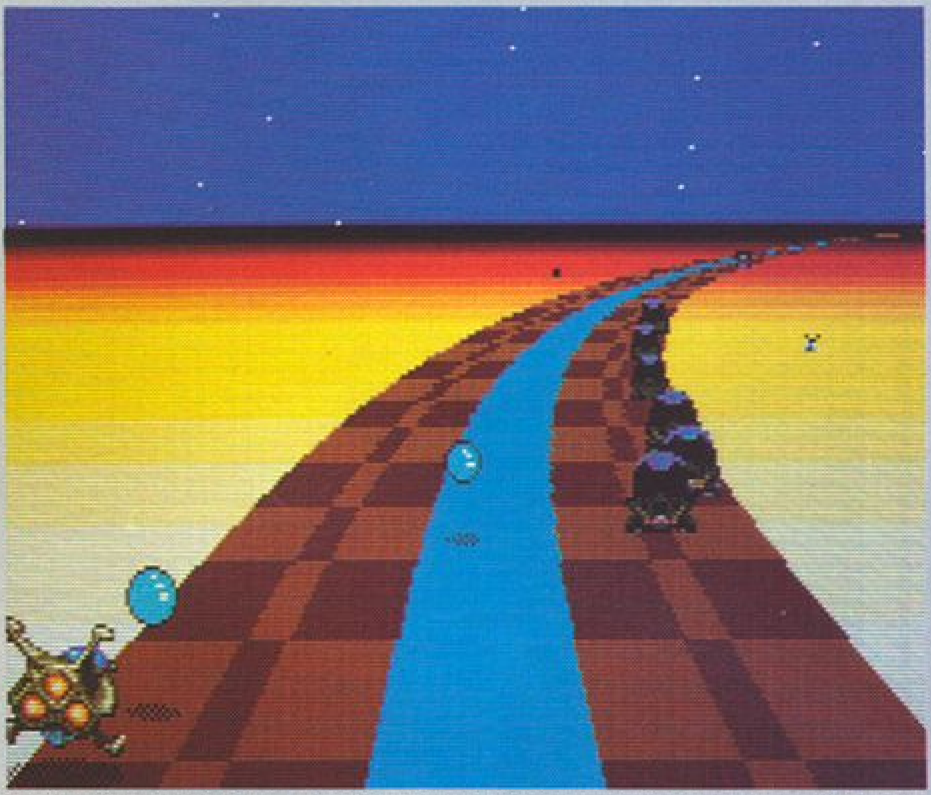
Early on the game is quite difficult, but after a few games you'll start knowing what to expect from a programmer who's determined to make life tricky. Once again John Phillips has come up with a game that will have you cursing him for putting in such wickedly tough problems – but you won't be able to stop having a go at them.

● Bob Wade

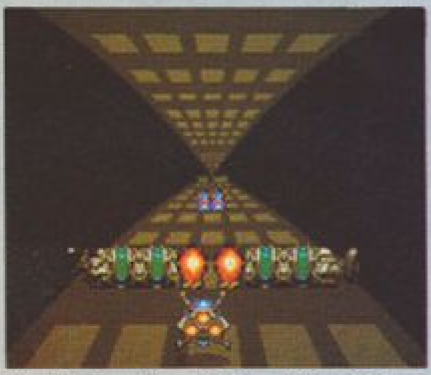
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



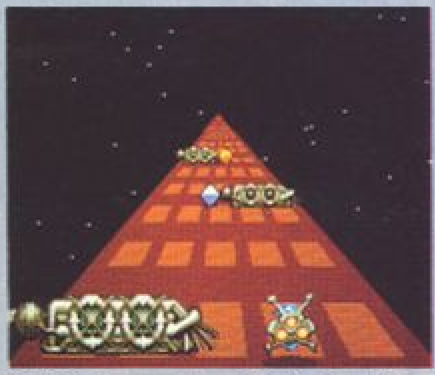
Tough at first but it quickly hooks you. The passwords and variety of levels keep it interesting.



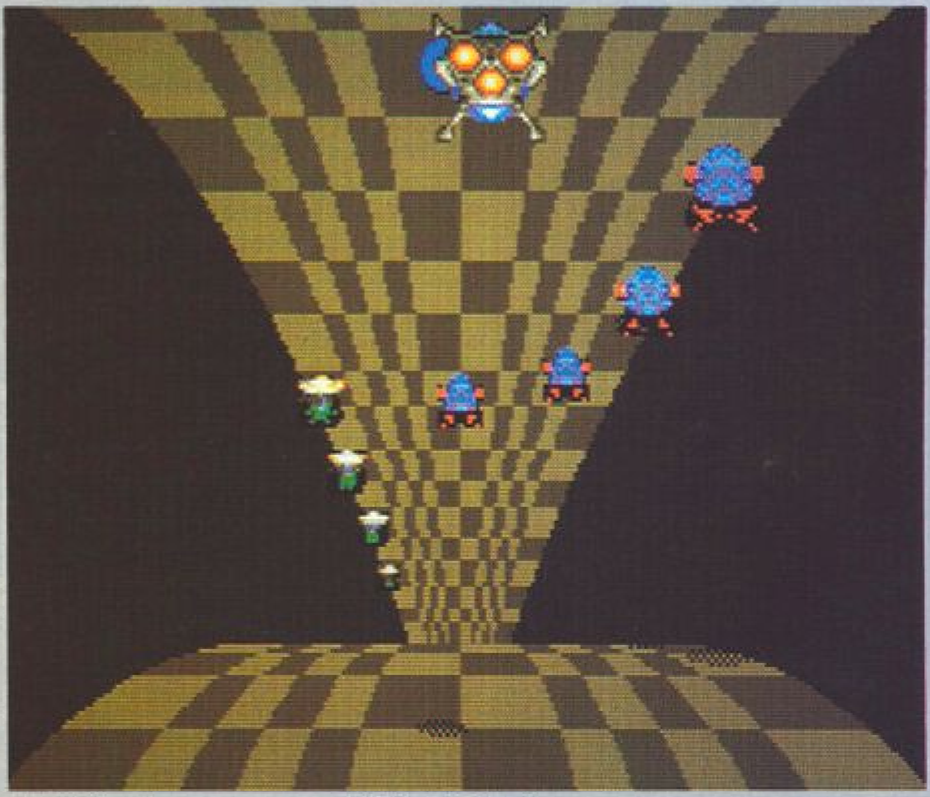
That river in the middle of the road can't be driven on, but somehow you've got to try to avoid those two spheres that will damage your shield.



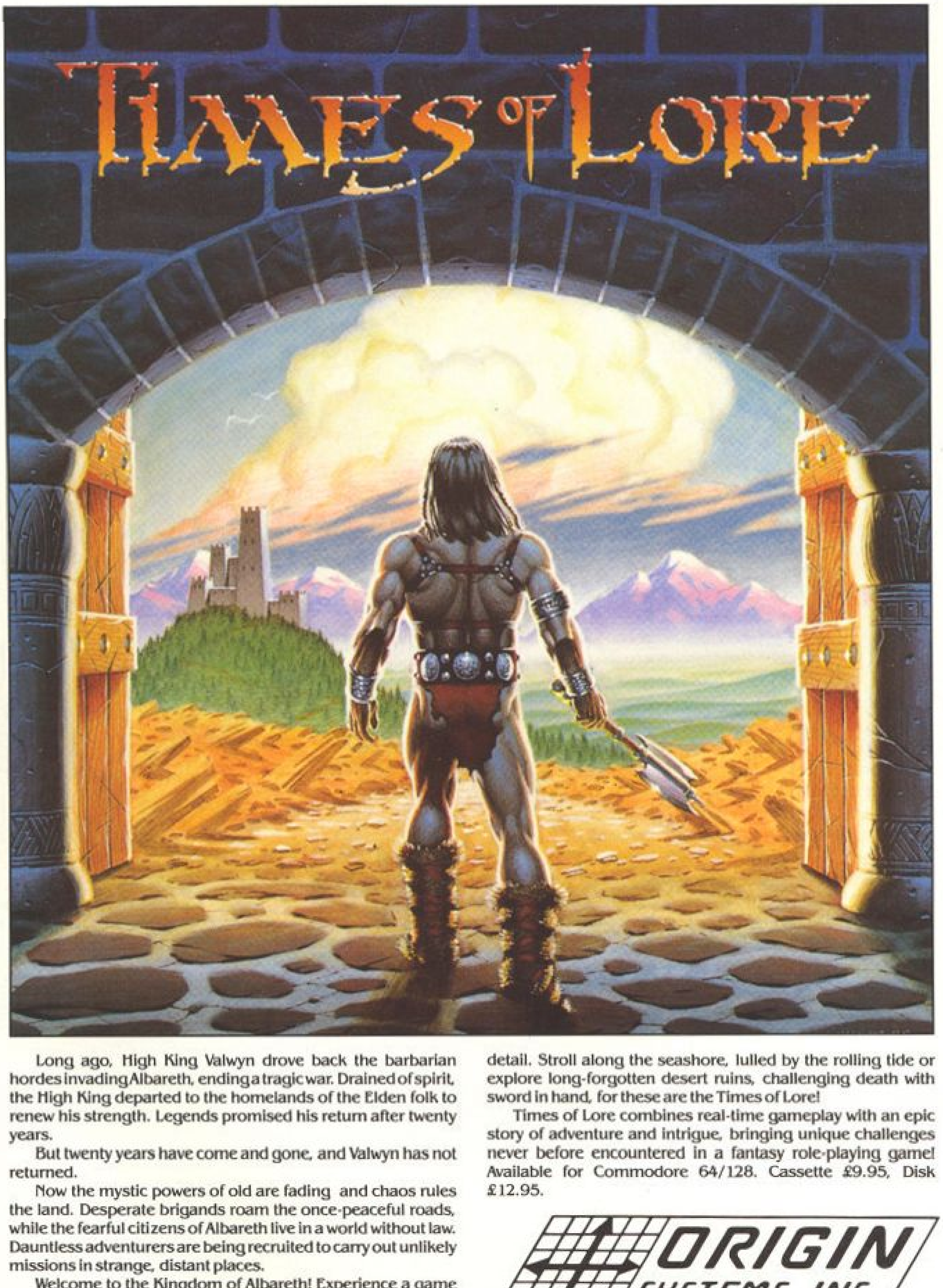
Shoot the two targets in the middle of the barrier and then dodge the indestructible blocks behind.



You'll have to weave through the barriers, picking up the extra weapons (blue pyramid) and ammo (orange cube) on the way.



The world's gone crazy – can you cope with life upside down?



Long ago, High King Valwyn drove back the barbarian hordes invading Albareth, ending a tragic war. Drained of spirit, the High King departed to the homelands of the Elden folk to renew his strength. Legends promised his return after twenty years.

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EMPIRE

ELECTRONIC ARTS beam down

AMIGA VERSION

The graphics may be crude and the sound effects dull, but the game's fun to play in the short-term.

GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 618

ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics are not impressive and the sound's poor, but the game plays well. It's a shame it all becomes too repetitive to keep you interested for long.

GRAPHICS	3	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 606

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT

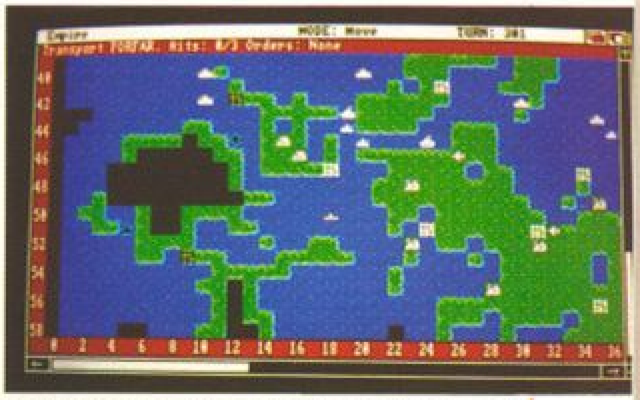
KRELLANS really are mean alien types. They first appeared in ACE issue 11 in the game *Star Fleet 1*. Then they were invading Alliance space and it was down to you to stop them. Now they're invading middle-low tech planets in Alliance space and you're on the spot again.

Empire's a strategic game of conquest that can accommodate up to three players (computer or human). The player starts the game with one city and has to conquer all the other cities (between 50 and 80) on the planet. Each city (once captured) can be assigned to produce a particular unit, e.g. army, battleship, transport ship etc to help in the war effort.

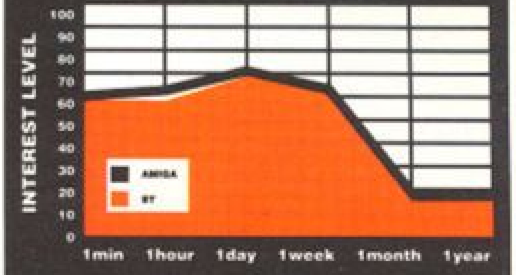
Each unit has a movement limit per turn – the player can either use the mouse or numeric keypad to move them one step in any of eight directions until their allowance is used up, or can use the mouse pointer and click on a destination several paces away, whereupon the unit will then move toward that objective every turn until it either gets there or its path becomes blocked.

Empire doesn't have state-of-the-art graphics or sound, but the gameplay's good and it's fun to play. The computer opponents can be tough and there are several set map 'worlds' to conquer. But the repetitive nature of the game and the limited options mean you'll soon find that one war's much like another – and that kills off your interest quickly.

● Andy Smith



Well into the game on the Amiga. The second player (red) has been crushed already and that just leaves the third player (black) to conquer.



Once you've fought a couple of wars you'll be looking for something with more variety.

SUMMER OLYMPIAD

Seoul searching TYNESOFT

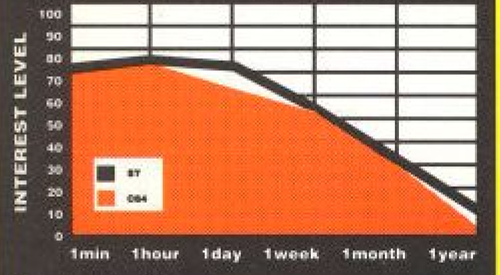
BARON Pierre De Coubertin's the chap who restarted the Olympic tradition back in 1896, and since we're in Olympic season, Tynesoft have decided to release *Summer Olympiad*, the follow-up to last year's *Winter Olympiad*.

The five events you have the chance to compete in are: Skeet Shooting, where you try to shoot as many clay pigeons as possible: Triple Jump, where you hop, step and jump your way into a sandpit: High Diving, where you try to be as graceful and acrobatic as possible and avoid belly-flopping: Fencing, which involves parrying and lunging: Hurdling, where you waggle your way to the tape.

Up to six players can compete at once, and events can be chosen individually if so desired. When in competition, each player has three attempts at each event (except Skeet Shooting) to register a decent score, and medals are then awarded accordingly.

There have been dozens of these multi-event wagglers over the years, and *Summer Olympiad* offers little apart from nice graphic touches that hasn't been seen and done before.

● Andy Smith



A shade on the shallow side.

ATARI ST VERSION

Terrific graphics and perspective views of some events can't hide the aged game style. You'll soon burn this one out.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 630

C64 VERSION

Wonderful graphics and adequate sound. Plays as well on the C64 as it does on the ST.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 600

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	OUT NOW
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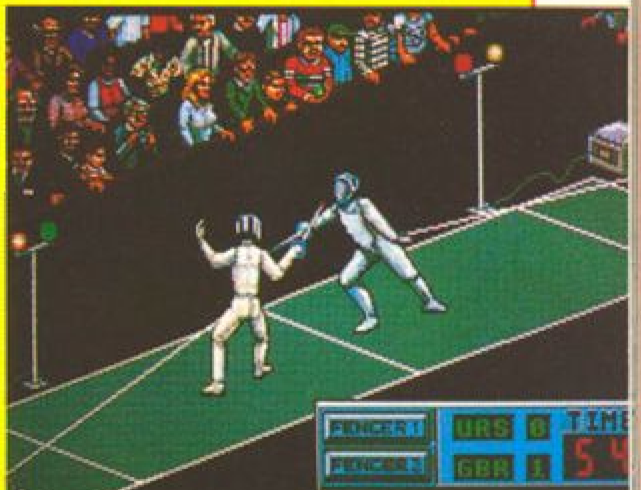

Fencing on the ST. You're the chap on the left, parrying the other guy's lunge.

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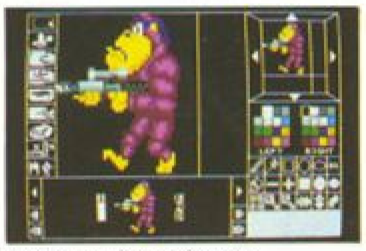
STOS

The Game Creator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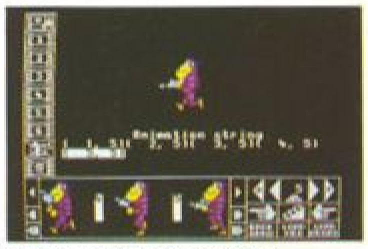
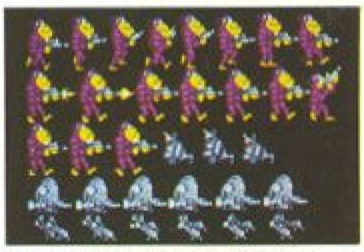
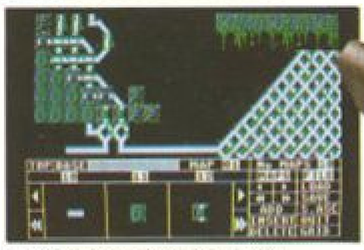
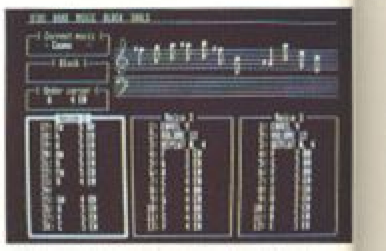
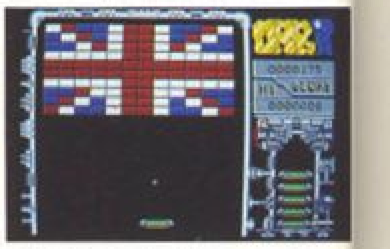
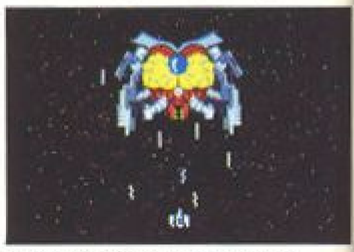

Set the sprites in motion with the animator section

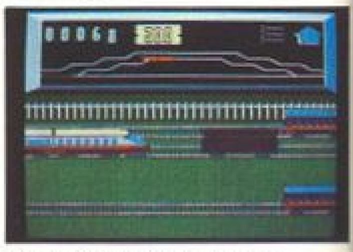

Choose from a range of example sprites included with STOS


Produce a layout for each screen with the room designer


Create dynamic sound effects and compose a suitable score


Construct devious screens in the feature-packed Orbit game


Draw the flight paths of the attacking aliens in Zoltar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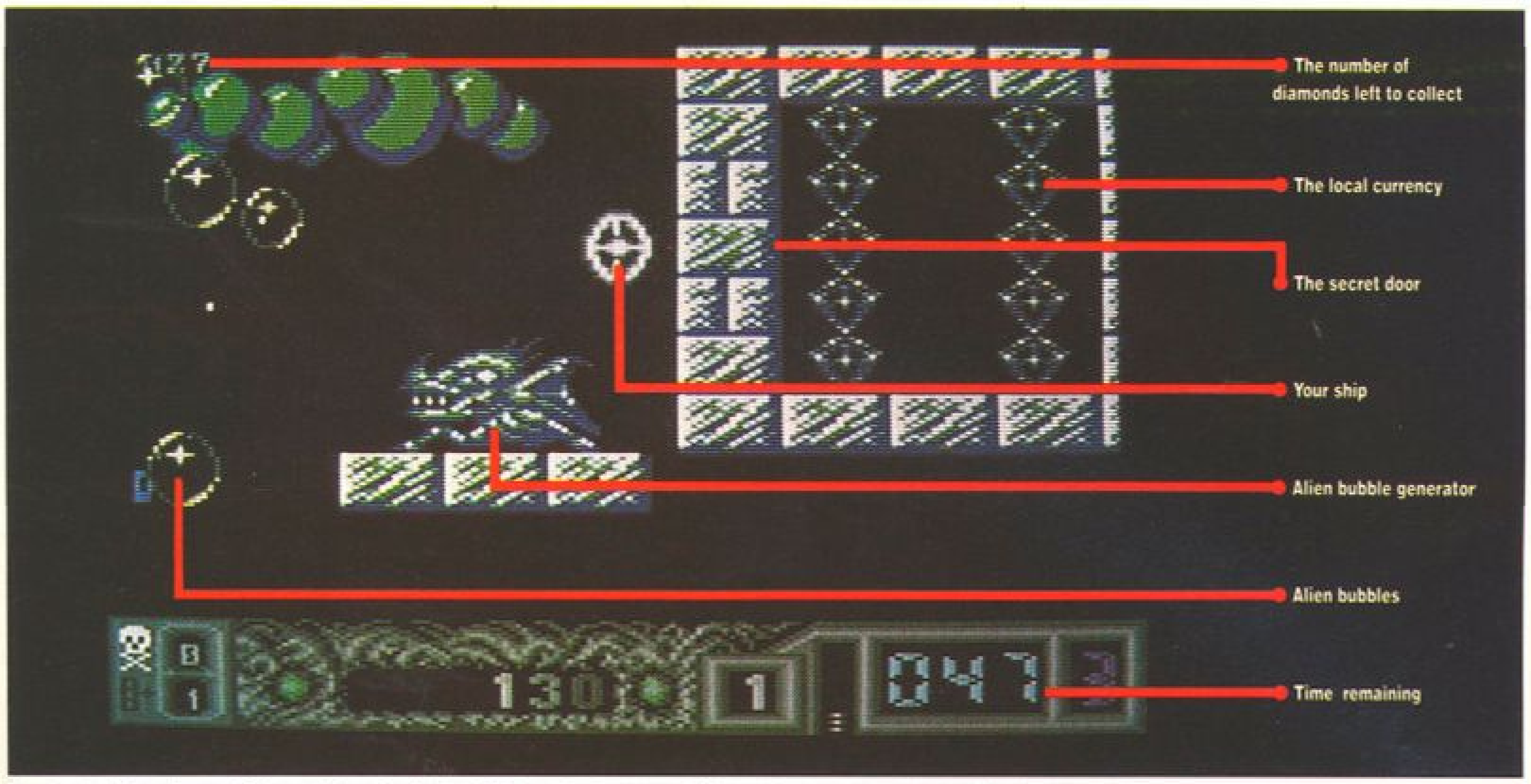


How to get at those diamonds? You could try shooting the bubbles and collect some 'brick smashers' or you could try looking for a secret door.

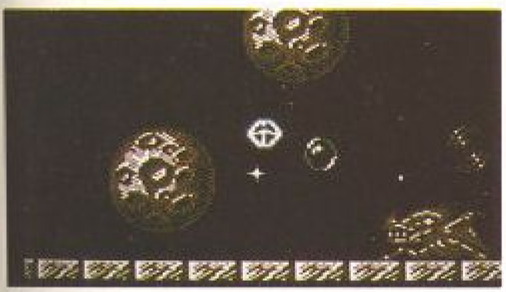
NETHERWORLD

HEWSON's Finnished game

JUKKA Tapanimaki's the Finnish author of this *Boulderdash*-in-space game. You're trapped, it would appear, in your spaceship in a bizarre and strange world. Your only hope of escape is to collect enough of the local currency to be able to buy your way home.

These units of currency look surprisingly like diamonds, and for each screen you're given a set number of them to collect (all within a time limit of course). The diamonds are easy enough to pick up, since all you have to do is fly into them – but actually getting at the diamonds is another matter. Walls, skulls and even mini-planets can all block your path and add to your frustration. They either have to be avoided or have holes knocked in them.

While obstructions may be annoying, what'll really get you riled are the swarms of deadly nasties and bubbles that spew forth from the alien generators present on each of the twelve levels. Fortunately, you're armed with a four-way rapid-firing gun, and by shooting some of the nasties and bubbles you can force them to release benefits.



At the start of level two – that ring structure's a teleport that sends you to another location on the level.

These benefits include brick smashers, which come in jolly handy right at the start of the game when you discover a brick enclosure on the first level that contains a dozen or so diamonds you need. You could wait near a generator and shoot all the bubbles it releases in the hope that one may contain a brick smasher that allows you access, or you could try searching the enclosure for a secret door (the best method). Other benefits include demon killers (whose use is obvious).

Flying through hordes of nasties with guns blazing is not always a recommended approach, though, because you're bound to take hits, and colliding with too many nasties sees you losing one of your initial three lives. Thankfully, you don't have to re-start the whole level every time you lose a life, but you do if you fail to collect the set number of diamonds within the time limit. You can try to gain yourself some extra time by collecting hour glasses that are scattered around the levels – these add 30 seconds to your time. Extra lives are awarded at the end of the level, but you have to work for them by completing a different bonus screen for each one.

Netherworld takes the *Boulderdash* genre one step further and the screens are tough enough to have you tearing out your hair with frustration. Though it's not an original idea, it's been nicely worked to make an enjoyable game.

● Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

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AMS	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
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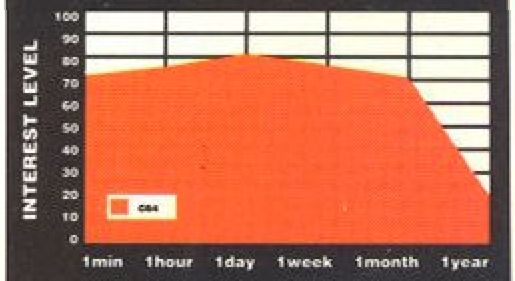
C64 VERSION

The graphics are superbly drawn and the scrolling's very smooth. Sound, too, is enjoyable and the game plays very well indeed. With 12 levels to complete you're not going to be finishing this one in a hurry.

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	5
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 820

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great fun – that lasts.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The force stays with DOMARK

DARTH'S a bit miffed. And with good reason too. His Death Star's been destroyed and now he's after revenge.

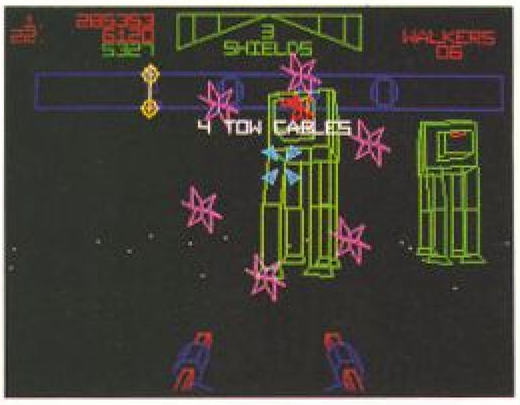
In this, the second of the *Star Wars* series, you command Luke Skywalker's snowspeeder vehicle and Han Solo's Millenium Falcon spacecraft and have to battle your way through four stages to reach the safety of the Rebels' hideout on the asteroid Hoth.

The first level of game has you in the snowspeeder trying to stop a bunch of Imperial Probots transmitting pictures of the Rebels' power generator back to Darth Vader. The second stage has you – again in the snowspeeder – fighting to stop a lot of AT-AT and AT-ST walkers. The AT-ATs are the larger of the two walkers and are tougher to stop because you have to shoot them directly in the head. You do have several tow-cables you can use to fell the beasts if you can't see their heads however. The third level has you in Han Solo's spacecraft amidst a asteroid storm. The final level sees you still in the spacecraft fighting off a swarm of Tie-fighters that pump out fireballs at you.

You start the game with five shields, and receiving a hit from either a fireball or an asteroid reduces that number by one. Extra bonuses are earnt in the game by shooting a set number of the enemy, you then get awarded a letter from the word JEDI. Manage to get all four and you're awarded a hefty bonus before starting the whole thing over again, with more of the enemy to shoot.

The Empire Strikes Back captures all the flavour and all the fun of the original coin-op. *Unfortunately, the lack of variety and challenge* means it doesn't take long to master the game.

● Andy Smith

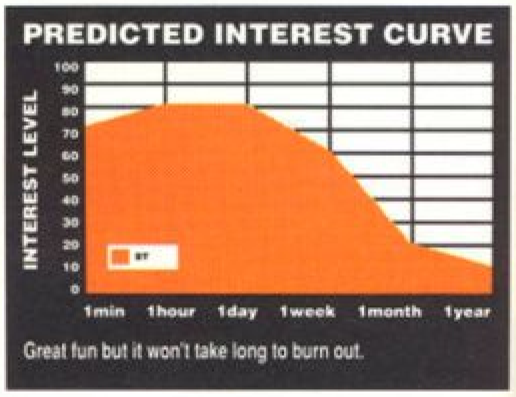


ATARI ST VERSION

The graphics make the game look very dated. It's good fun to play but suffers from lack of variety and challenge.

GRAPHICS 6 **IQ FACTOR** 1
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 7
ACE RATING 665

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.95cs • £12.95dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	IMMINENT


PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Great fun but it won't take long to burn out.

STAR GOOSE

LOGOTRON take a gander

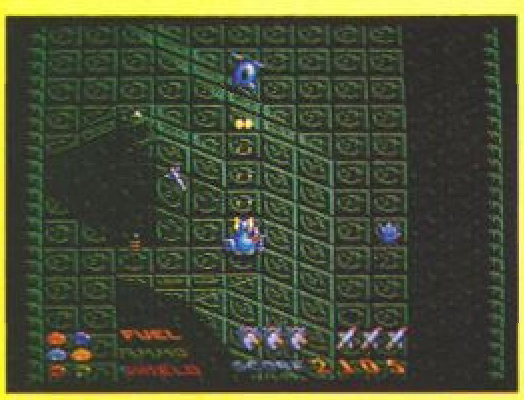
NOMMAN military strength is at an all-time high, so you've been ordered to raid their extensive ammo dumps. You'll have to blast ground installations, dodge marauding robots and snatch up supplies as the landscape of the planet Nom scrolls vertically beneath you. Collect the six coloured crystals on each level, pop down the exit this opens up and you're onto another round of the same, only harder. Just another shoot-em-up? Well no, not quite.

For one thing there's that landscape. It may scroll vertically, but it's far from 2D. Varying contours mean that your ground-skimming fighter's constantly climbing, diving or clinging to slopes as you blast your way onwards. This is all automatic – you don't actually have to change your fighter's pitch or roll angles at all – but the efffect on your firing can be crucial. Your bullets sail over enemy heads as you climb a pyramid, and thud uselessly into the ground in front of them as you descend the other side.

Re-supplying your ship is an odd process. Portals in the landscape offer entry to fuel, ammo and shield-energy tunnels where you can stock up, but the supplies aren't just handed to you on a plate. They've got to be collected in a little 3D sub-game where you swing your fighter up the walls or even right the way across the ceiling of the tunnel.

The overwhelming impression the game leaves with you is one of eccentricity. A host of unusual features make it stand out, but to be honest they do little to encourage extended play. The game object isn't interesting enough, there's too little scope for tactical thinking, and the landscape contouring idea doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the game. Originality is no substitute for gameplay!

● Andy Wilton



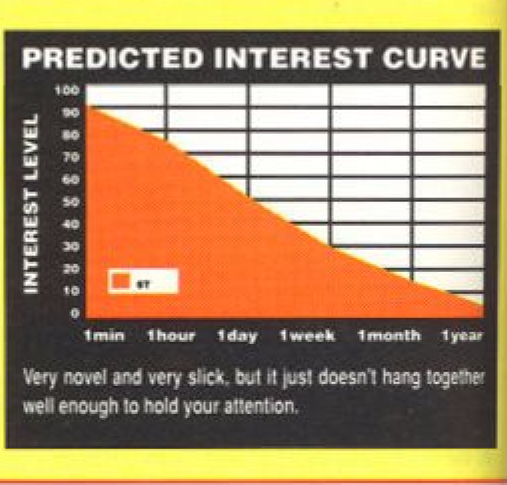
Firing at an enemy robot. You're under attack from a missile-firing ground installation, while there are mines off to the right.

ATARI ST VERSION

As you might expect from the authors of "Black Lamp", the game is a treat for the eyes and the ears. This polish isn't entirely matched by the uninspiring gameplay however.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 2
AUDIO 8 **FUN FACTOR** 3
ACE RATING 517

RELEASE BOX		
AMIGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		


PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Very novel and very slick, but it just doesn't hang together well enough to hold your attention.

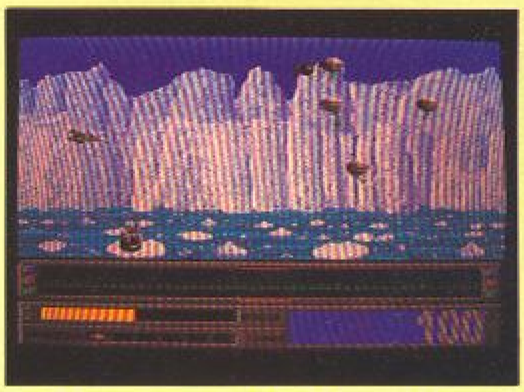
STAR RAY

LOGOTRON defend themselves

EUROPEAN programmers are a funny bunch and no two ways about it. They pour such effort into their graphics, spend so long honing those sound effects and for what? Why, for old coin-op game ideas of course. Hardly had the fad for continental *Break Out* clones subsided when this German-sourced *Defender* variant appeared.

We all know the general idea, but for the record it goes as follows: you fly your fighter over the surface of a horizontally scrolling planet, defending its installations from alien attack. Using rapid changes of direction and a fairly lethal laser cannon, you have to blast the assorted alien craft to pieces without crashing into them or their bullets. Destroy each wave of aliens and you get another, tougher one: clear three waves and you move onto the next stage and a new, meaner planet.

The game's not *Defender* through, and through – there's a shield rather than a number of lives, and dead aliens sometimes leave bonuses you can collect – but those differences are fairly superficial. More importantly, the aliens destroy your installations in situ rather than carrying them off, and it's game over if they all get trashed. This increases the urgency of the mission, and means that some *Defender* tactics don't work at all.


Level 3. You must protect that ground installation. Shoot the landers but not the satellite they're clustered around or it will jam your scanners temporarily.

Different features on each of the game's planets help keep your interest, and the impressive graphics – complete with a very fetching parallax scroll – will certainly turn a few heads, but at heart this is a very old game concept. Long on addictiveness, short on originality, it's one for shoot-em-up freaks only – but isn't that most of us?

● Andy Wilton

AMIGA VERSION

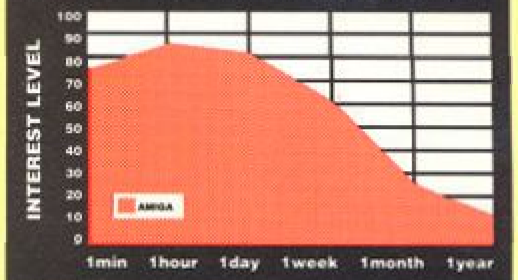
The backgrounds, effects and sprites all make terrific use of the Amiga's graphic capabilities. Unfortunately those oh-so-detailed backdrops can make it a bit tough to spot stationary nasties at times, but that's not too serious a problem.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 689

RELEASE BOX		
AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£14.95dk	OCT '88
IBM PC	Under consideration	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Derivative, certainly, but compulsive too – till you tire of its shallowness.

THE GAMES ~ WINTER EDITION

EPYX get competitive

HOW would you fancy hurtling down some ice at a terrific rate of knots, sat on something not far removed from a tea-tray? Well, if you never get the chance to chance your arm, and leg and pelvis etc, on a Luge in real life, Epyx offer you the chance to experience the computer simulation.

Although most of the world's attention is on the Olympics in Seoul, Epyx's latest release is a collection of seven events from the Winter Olympics. The event line up now follows. The luge, which makes normal bob-sleighing look like a sunday joy-ride. Figure skating, which gives you the chance to choreograph a series of moves to music before you try and execute the routine. Speed skating, where you have to rythmically waggle the joystick to gain the maximum speed. Downhill skiing, which gives you a skier's eye view of the gates that come hurtling toward you. Slalom skiing – it may not be as fast as downhill, but your control will need to be much more precise. Ski jumping's – not the U.K's strongest event, but if you're good enough on the simulation you can out-jump the competition and grab that gold medal. Cross country skiing's the final event and is another rythmic waggler.

Each event can be selected individually so the player can practise it before competing and there's also the option to compete in either some or all the events. *The Games – Winter Edition* has little that's original to offer, but it's well put together and is fun to play.

● Andy Smith

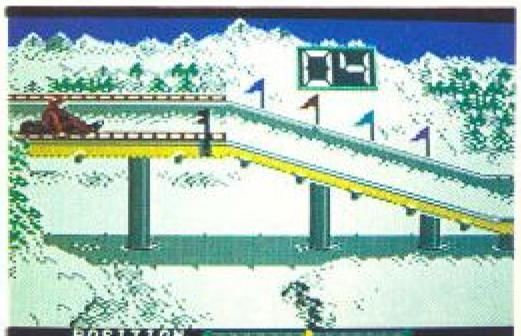
C64 VERSION

The animation for each event's superb. Some of the events are harder than others but even then it doesn't take too long to master the tough ones. Good, but un-original, fun.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

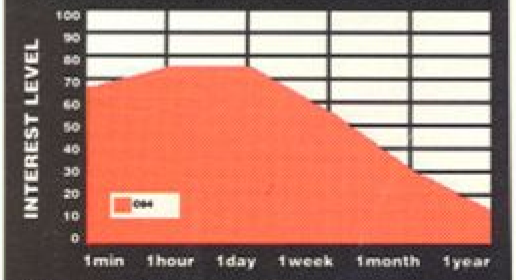
ACE RATING 653

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£8.99cs • £12.99dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

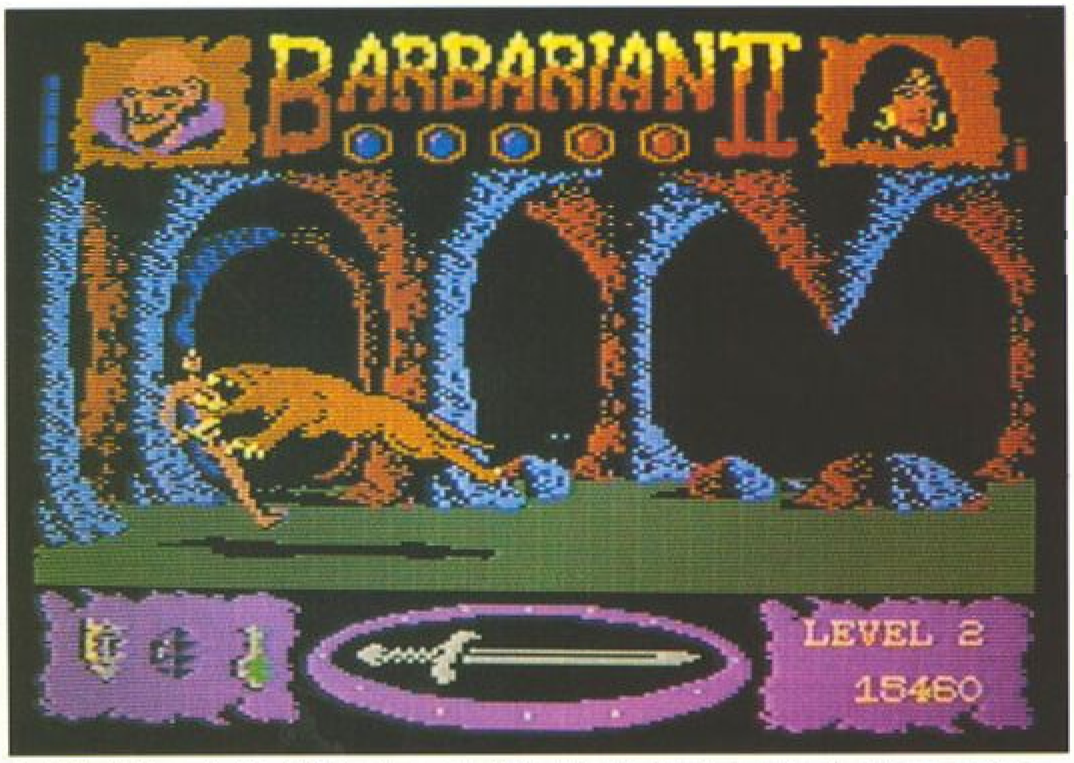


Preparing to make your run on the luge. Just think, people do this for real!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



It doesn't take long to master the events.



Controlling Mariana on level two. That carnivourous beast's tough to deal with and you can't survive too many maulings.

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£9.99cs • £12.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.99dk	IMMINENT

BARBARIAN II

PALACE come out for the 2nd round

DRAX is back. Having fled to his dungeons after being defeated in the first game (all too easily). He's now sworn to wreak havoc on the lands of the Jewelled Kingdom and it's down to you to see he doesn't manage it.

In *Barbarian II* you get the chance to play either the warrior or Princess Mariana, who you rescued in the first game. There's no actual difference in gameplay, so your choice of character is influenced purely by whether you'd like to see a woman or a man hacking through the nasties.

As with most beat-em-ups, you've got a variety of moves at your disposal, including the infamous 'flying neck chop'. Basically, aggressive moves are effected by moving the joystick while you keep the fire button pressed. Non-aggressive moves usually just require the player to move the joystick in a certain direction.

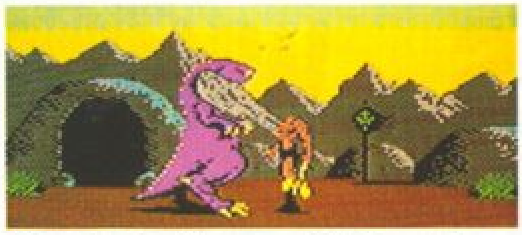
The game has four levels, and instead of fighting the same warriors time after time, there are now a multitude of nasties to deal with. These come in two main sizes – small enemies that are about waist height, and large enemies that can tower over you. Plus you do get the occasional flying or crawling nasty.

The creatures you meet depend on which level you happen to be on. The first level, which is a maze of some 28 screens connected by caves, puts you up against such nasties as mutant (rubber?) chickens, and cavemen. The second level, again a maze, throws orcs, crabs and various other beasties at you. The third level – set in the actual dungeons – gives you huge jailers and the like to contend with. The final level gives you a mere three nasties (including Drax) to defeat, but unless you've collected some of the special items that were to be found lying around on the earlier levels, you're gonna find life very tough.

These extras include such things as the Jewel, which enables you to pass the first of the three nasties on the final level with little difficulty, the Axe, which increases your strength, and the shield, which guards against instant death from the second of the final nasties. Picking up these objects is easy enough, since you simply have to walk over them. The same goes for extra lives, which are represented by skulls lying on the ground – once you've got them you hang onto them until you've lost all your lives. Thankfully, even when you have lost your last life, you restart from the current level.

Barbarian II's certainly an improvement on the first game, which proved to be far too easy to complete. You're going to have to adopt different tactics to defeat each of the various monsters (some of whom are very, very vicious) which means you'll be playing this for a long time to come. The beat-em-up genre may be a bit long in the tooth nowadays, but if you're a fan you'll like the variety offered in *Barbarian II*.

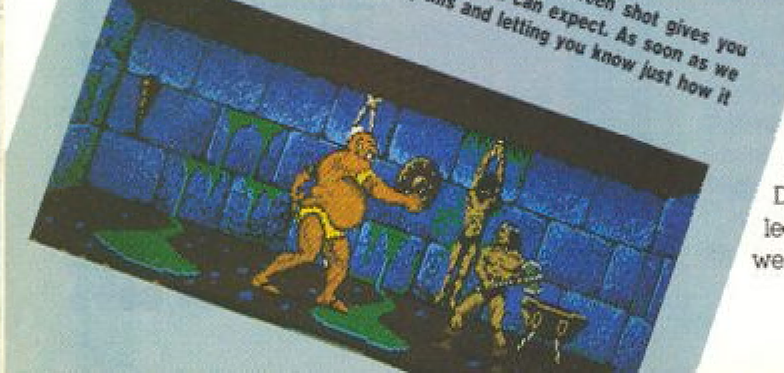
● Andy Smith



Right at the start of the game, and already your foes are proving to be snappy!

THE ST VERSION

Though the ST version's not yet finished, this screen shot gives you some idea of the standard of graphics you can expect. As soon as we get the chance we'll be updating this and letting you know just how it plays. Watch this space!



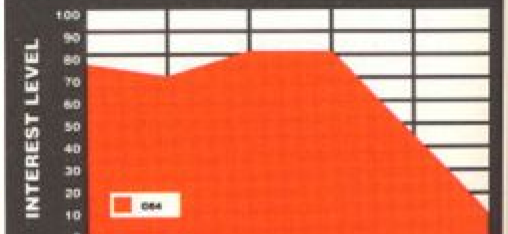
C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound are good, but the gameplay can be a little tricky until you get used to what moves are available to you. Until you work out some winning tactics, you'll find it frustrating being killed off so easily.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 754

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Good hacking fun – once you've learnt the moves.

SUPER HANG-ON

UPDATE SPECIAL

ATARI ST ● Electric Dreams £19.99dk

FOUR wheels have been all the rage lately, but now two-wheeled ST tearaways can get to grips with the turbocharged excitement that's been burning up the 8-bits for nine months. The game is very similar to *Out Run* in concept – racing stages that have to be completed within a time limit. So who's best on the ST?

Here you've got 48 stages split into four different continents. Africa is the shortest, made up of only six stages, but even that will prove a tough challenge. Each course is packed with bends and lined with obstacles. Straying off the edge of the road and into an obstacle will result in a bone jarring crash.

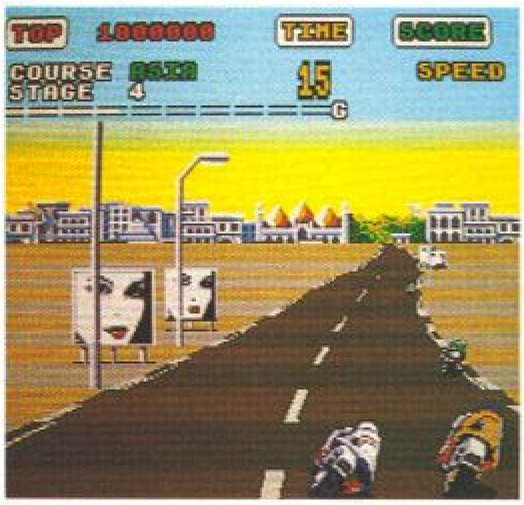
Keeping the bike on the track is tricky, and complicated by the other riders. They travel pretty fast and will try to maintain the best racing line. That means they get in your way a lot, slowing you down and occasionally bumping you off the road.

ATARI ST VERSION

The big difference apart from the obviously improved graphics, is in the mouse control. The bike is much more responsive to the mouse than the joystick, providing realistic, fast handling.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	9

ACE RATING 892

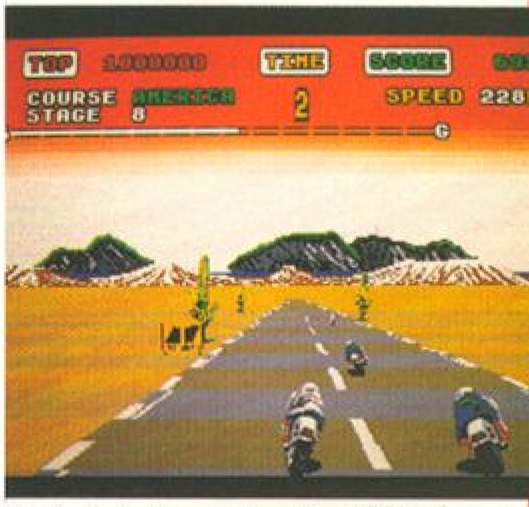


Blasting past on the outside of the bend as the billboard looks on.

You'll manage to get through a few stages quite quickly, but the time limits get tough and to complete courses you'll need to optimise performance on the early stages. Use of the nitro is also crucial. You can only use it when you hit top speed, but it really cuts the stage time down. Control then becomes the main problem because it's all too easy to come off at a corner.

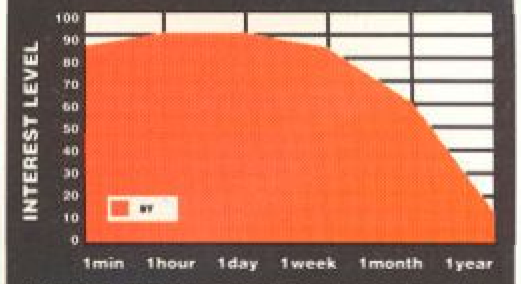
In terms of a lasting challenge it's better than *Out Run*, although there's less variety in the routes you travel. Two-wheeled action at its best.

● Bob Wade



The time's about to run out on stage 8 in America and there's no sign of the checkpoint.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Two wheels give you more of a long-term challenge than four.

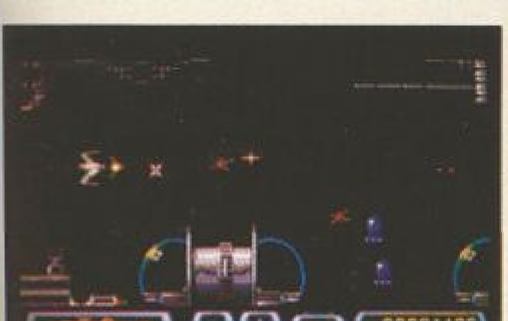
ZYNAPS

UPDATE SPECIAL

ATARI ST ● Hewson £19.99dk

BACK in 1987 this was a big hit on the 8-bit machines. There isn't the same quantity of horizontal scrolling shoot-em-ups on the ST – although there have been a lot of vertical ones.

It's a simple enough concept to grasp – blast your way through hordes of alien craft and then deal with the end of level guardians. The alien waves vary in type and behaviour. They also appear in random patterns, so you can't 'learn' how to complete a level – it's hard work all the way.



The ship's on the left of the screen with a weapon upgrade star in front of it.

While battling the aliens you'll have to avoid the scenery as well. At times it forces you into narrow corridors where avoiding the aliens and their missiles is very difficult.

You can enhance your speed and firepower by destroying waves of aliens and collecting the star that's left. Getting the extra weapons is essential for long-term survival and being able to destroy the guardians.

Apart from the waves of flying aliens you'll encounter ground installations that fire homing missiles. On level two there's an asteroid storm to deal with as well.

There's nothing very original about this, but then there wasn't about the 8-bit versions either. It's a difficult shoot-em-up that will cause plenty of frustration and a challenge for months ahead.

● Bob Wade

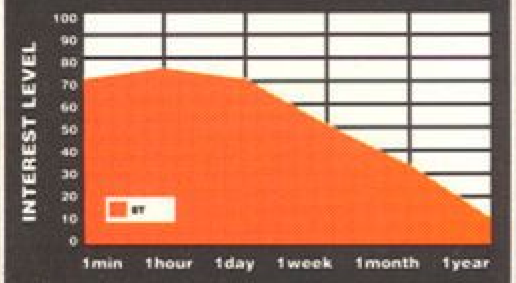
ATARI ST VERSION

There's some nice scenery graphics and adequate sound effects. The gameplay matches up well to the 8-bit versions but doesn't have anything new to offer.

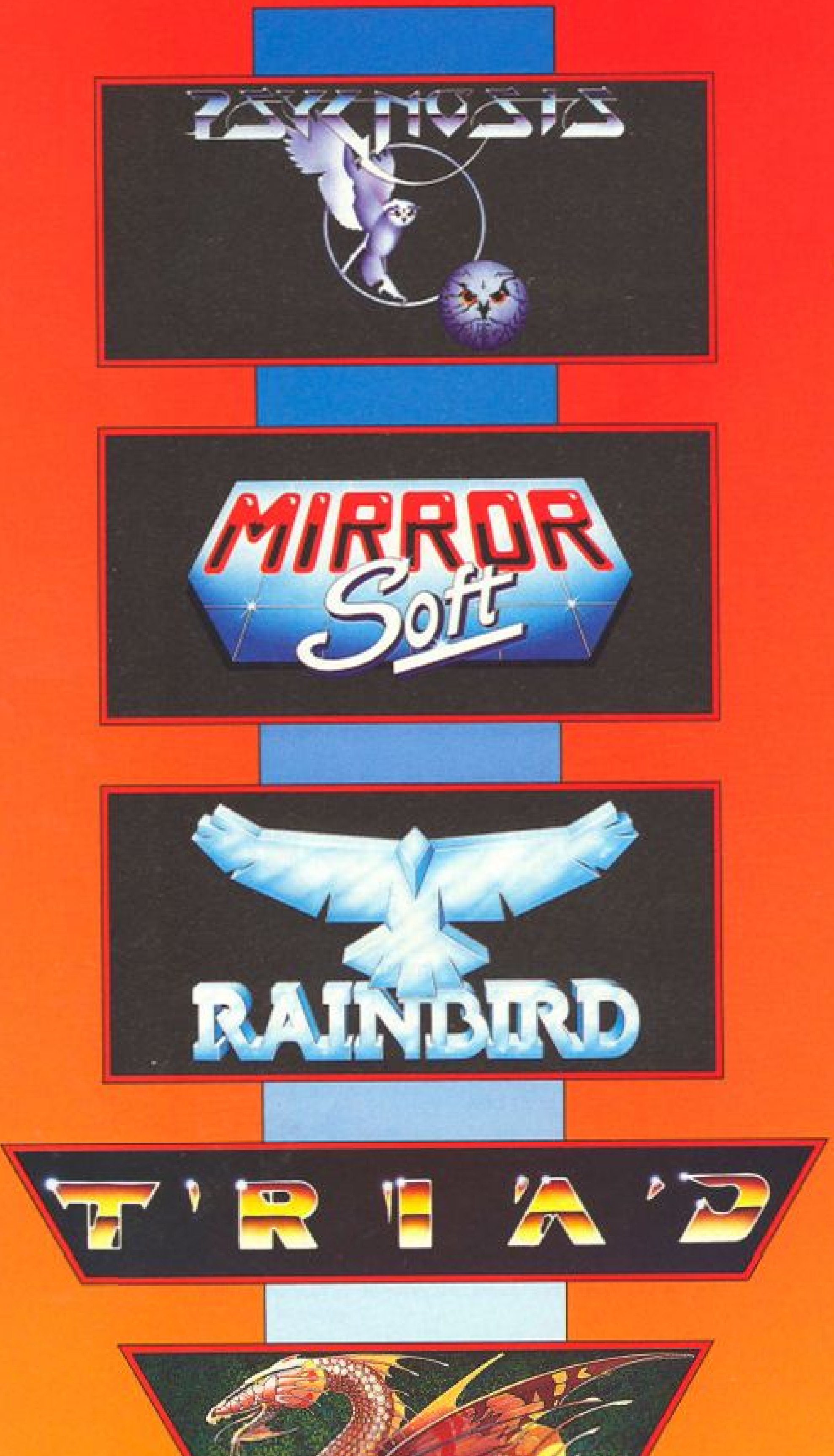
GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 642

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A tough blast that never reaches enormous heights of addiction.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HANGE PLAYERS POS
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ONUS PAY
SURANCE / FORMATION
UILD STANDS
LTER TICKET PRICES
ATTENDANCE
TEAM SHIRTS
LOAN PLAYERS
TRANSFER LIST
CLUB LOTTERY
POLICE BILLS
DIRECTORS
★ TAX REBATE
SEE ALL FOUR DIV'S
★ HISTORY PAGE
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TEAM MORAL
SACK PLAYERS
SEE POSTPONEMENTS
MANAGER OF THE MONTH
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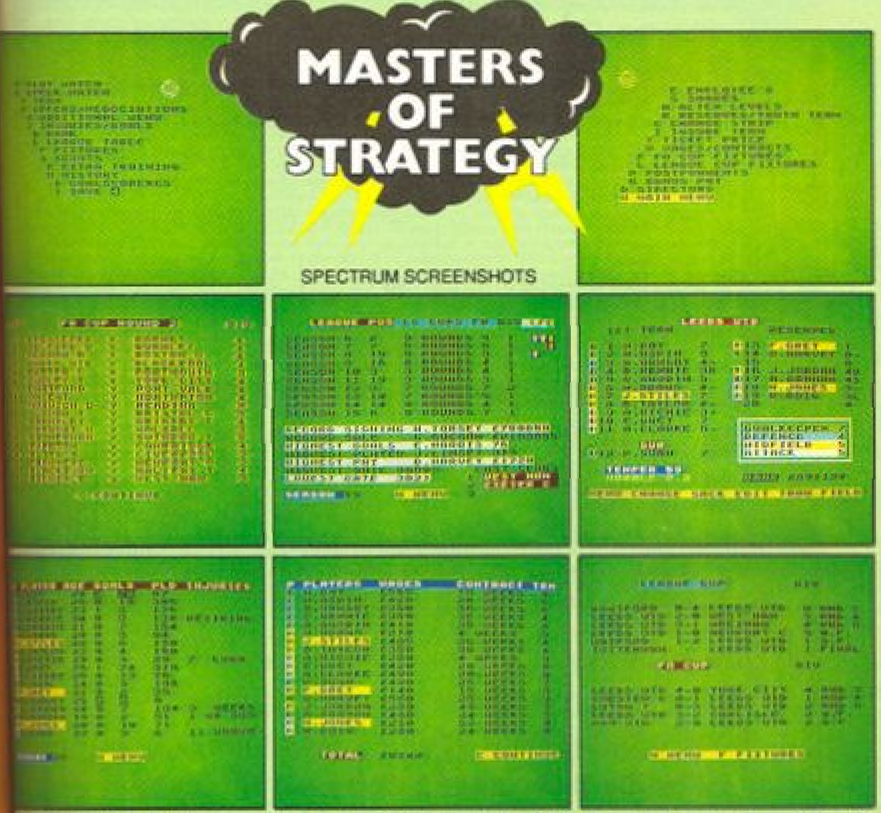

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AMIGA

CARRIER COMMAND

Rainbird 24.95dk

Atari ST version reviewed issue 9 - ACE rating 927

Carrier Command is a great blend of arcade and strategy action. The graphics are superb, but there's no noticeable difference between the graphics on the Amiga and the graphics on the ST. Sound is much better on the Amiga however. If you like to do a little thinking as well as shooting everything in sight, or you like a spot of blasting to break up all that strategic planning, *Carrier Command* could well be just your sort of game.

● ACE RATING 927

AMSTRAD

ACTION FORCE

Virgin 8.95cs 14.95dk

C64 Version reviewed issue 4 - Ace rating 543

In this game of the toy, you're piloting the Dragonfly helicopter and trying to protect your buddy who's rumbling along in his C5-like buggy. The graphics are o.k. and the scrolling etc is fast, but the game's dull to play and it doesn't take long for your interest to wear off.

● ACE RATING 289

GUNSHIP

Microprose 14.95cs 19.95dk

PC version reviewed issue 4 - ACE rating 902

The all-American bomb 'n' blast helicopter sim makes it onto the CPC in style. Almost everything's there except the medal presentations. The graphics are great, the action's manic at times ,and all things considered, the game's probably the best helicopter combat simulator available for the Amstrad.

● ACE RATING 889

ATARI ST

MICKEY MOUSE

Gremlin £19.99dk

Spectrum version reviewed issue 11 - ACE Rating 743

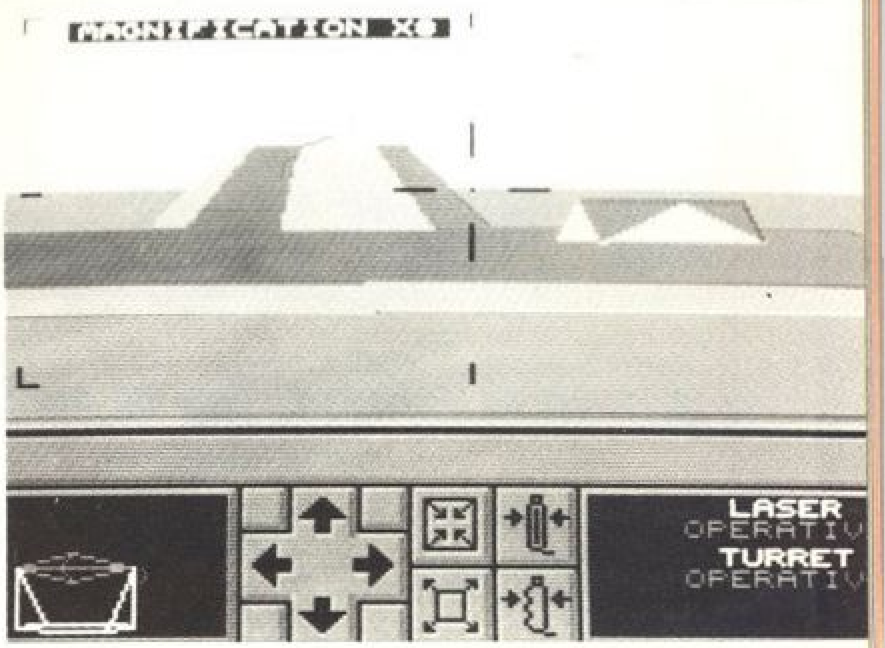
ST owners not only get the best graphics, sound effects and animation of all the versions, but they get an extra bit of action at the top of each tower. You have to battle it out with a witch who throws fireballs at you, before moving on to the next tower. Lose and you'll have to complete the tower again. It makes the game a bit tougher to get through and combined with the improved graphics it's certainly a better game.

●ACE RATING 790

REVENGE OF DOH

Imagine £19.95dk

Amstrad version reviewed issue 8 -



ACE Rating 749
Spectrum version reviewed issue 8 - ACE Rating 671

Breakout freaks can immerse themselves in hordes of bricks and bouncing balls again. This is a faithful conversion that adds in features that the 8-bit versions missed out. The number of balls you get when picking up divide capsules is enormous. The aliens too come in various forms like bouncing balls and spinning spheres that split into three. The ball movement is a trifle jerky – mainly because it moves so fast. Doesn't add much to the *Breakout* theme, but it's hard.

● ACE RATING 788

C64

BARBARIAN

Psygnosis/Melbourne House £9.99cs £14.99dk
ST version reviewed issue 1 - ACE rating 725

This icon-driven arcade-style adventure was stunning to look at on the 16-bit machines a year ago, but it suffered then from poor control. The C64 version of the game is better to control (given the lack of mouse), but once you take the nice graphics away, the game really shows itself as being a very mundane (and not hard to complete) piece of trial and error arcade adventuring.

● ACE RATING 544

MICKEY MOUSE

Gremlin £9.99cs £14.99dk
Spectrum version reviewed issue 11 - ACE Rating 743

Doesn't have anywhere near the graphic detail of the Spectrum version but is more colourful. In gameplay terms there's really nothing to choose between them. The sub-games look better but there's still an initial disappointment at the rather blocky graphics for the tower. Once you're over that though it's the same very enjoyable Disney caper.

● ACE RATING 730

THREE STOOGES

Mirrorsoft £14.99dk
Amiga version reviewed issue 10 ACE Rating 695

The Amiga version was a bit short on gameplay and there's not much difference between the two on those terms. The digitised speech is still there and as funny as ever, but the graphics have lost detail and hence the full enjoyment of some of the animation. The sequences play slightly differently, noticeably in the hospital, but are exactly the same in nature. The stooges is still funny on the C64 but hasn't gained much lasting interest. Completing it isn't easy though and fans of the stooges will love it.

● ACE RATING 695

PC

DESERT RATS

CCS 19.95dk

This one or two player wargame simulates the war in N. Africa between December 1940 and December 1942. There are eight scenarios in the game including an option that allows you to fight the whole campaign. The graphics are nothing special and neither is the sound, but the game plays well (if a little slowly) and if you're after a good, playable but tough wargame, you won't go far wrong.

● ACE RATING 835

DARK SIDE

Incentive £19.95dk
Amstrad version reviewed issue 11 - ACE Rating 915
Spectrum version reviewed issue 11 - ACE Rating 904
C64 version reviewed issue 12 - ACE Rating 904

The programming system Freescape is a real dream for PC owners because it operates so much faster on their machines. It's an impressive game on the 8-bits, but on PC it really shows its paces.

The game map is the same as for the 8-bit versions, but the increased speed of movement makes it a much easier game to get into. If anything you may end up solving the game rather quickly. The colour and shading are excellent, helped by having options for it to run on CGA, EGA and Hercules. By far the best version yet – can the ST and Amiga ones improve upon it?

● ACE RATING 923

SPECTRUM

ROADBLASTERS

US Gold £8.99cs £12.99dk
C64 version reviewed issue 12 - ACE Rating 654

If anything the gameplay is better on this version because the car is more manoeuverable about the road. It doesn't just stick in one lane when going round corners if you don't turn, however it still doesn't drive naturally. The extra weapons are also more useable and can be carried over between stages if you haven't used them up.

The graphics are virtually vectors, with little filling in. This means the speed is kept up but there's not much in the way of colour. It's probably a bit tougher than the C64 version, but it's none the worse for that. Spectrum *Out Run* owners will be relieved to know this is a much better conversion than that was. Coin-op blasters should be satisfied.

● ACE RATING 688

VIRUS

Firebird £7.95cs £12.95dk
Atari ST version reviewed issue 11 - ACE Rating 981

Converting a game that was developed on the Acorn Archimedes sounds like an impossibility, but that's what they've tried to do. All the features are here: hoverplane, seeders, mutants, fighters, pests, trees, rolling landscape. However, the hard part is getting the control of the hoverplane right, to make it as responsive as in its Archie and ST versions.

Sadly they haven't quite managed to pull it off. It's a valiant effort and Spectrum owners should still take a look at it because there's nothing else quite like it for them.

The ship control is much more awkward without a twin-button mouse, so getting familiar with them will take longer. Anybody who's played *Virus* on the ST is bound to be disappointed, but this stretches a Spectrum about as far as it can go in this direction. A nice try but no cigar.

● ACE RATING 631

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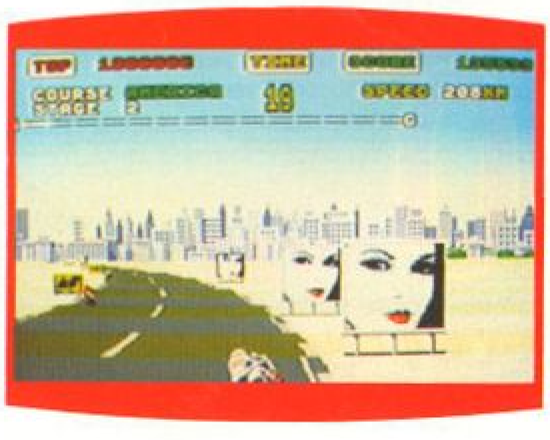

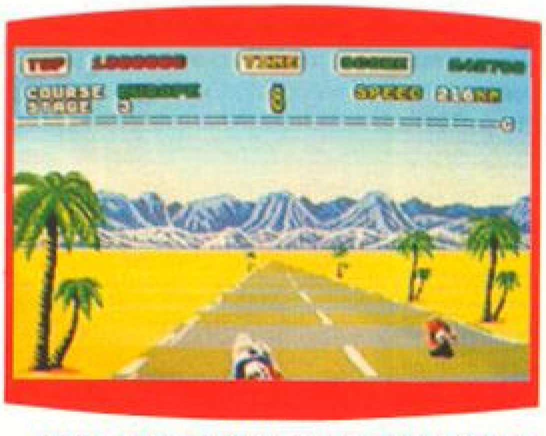

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BMF LIVE

Mark Jenkins reports from the British Music Fair – showcase for all the latest music technology...

Mid July saw the British Music Fair moving its well-established Olympia site to the Wembley Conference centre, which didn't prove much of a problem for the huge numbers of public types who were heading that way anyway to see some new singer chap called Michael Jackson at the nearby Wembley Stadium.

Much of the show was dominated by software rather than hardware, most of it running on the Atari ST, and much of it relatively affordable. So what we're doing here is presenting a quick tour around the BMF, taking a look at the items which would most attract the computer user with a reasonable budget for musical add-ons.

Yamaha, for a start, were launching a pair of new synthesizers which take the well worn concept of FM synthesis and turn it on its head. The **YS100** (£699) and **YS200** (£789) both have a full-size velocity and pressure sensitive keyboard, 100 preset and 100 programmable voices, built-in reverb and delay and RAM card storage, and there's a sequencer on the 200. They're both multi-timbral (capable of playing several sounds at once) and have EXTREMELY PECULIAR styling. Without wishing to be offensive, they look like keyboards designed for the extremely heavy-handed, with huge chunky controls like something out of the '50's. Yamaha's new **C1 Music Computer** – a portable IBM PC compatible with fold-down gas plasma screen, built in SMPTE time code synchronisation, eight MIDI Outs, and built-in 3.5' drives running editiors from Bacchus and a sequencer from Mark Of the Unicorn – is likely to be a big hit when it's introduced at a tad under £2,000 later this year. Go on, sell the house...

Music and MIDI for everyone at the BMF; the Casio PG380 synth/guitar, the new DM-100 dual mini keyboard sampler, and the TOA MR-8T eight -track cassette recorder.

SING·ALONG·A·MIDI

Digigram are a French company marketing two very exciting products through Farfisa in the UK. The MIDIMIC at £199 is a microphone which simultaneously converts any pitch fed to it into a MIDI note command. If you can hum a tune, you can now get it played on a synth or recorded into a MIDI sequencer. The MIDIMIC also has a jack socket to input a guitar or keyboard (although playing more than one note at a time will confuse it) and will work equally happily with flute, sax, trumpet and so on.

MIDIMIC is ideally suited for use with Digigrams's Atari ST Software package called Big Band. Enter a top line melody, for instance from the MIDIMIC, and Big Band will generate a selection of backings – chords, bass lines, arpeggios and so on – ideally played back on a cheap multitimbral module such as the Roland MT-32 or Yamaha FB-01 (now available at only £149 in your local music shop folks!). Some of the arrangements thus produced are obviously a little home organ-like but some of them are quite respectable, and the package certainly provides a quick way into song 'writing'.

On the keyboard side, Roland were perhaps slightly more on target, having hired a tasty young lady to show off the new **E20**. It's a home keyboard version of the **D20** LA synth, again a multi timbral unit with a built-in sequencer, plus speakers, preset drum patterns with fills and variations, and much more. Also on show – the **D-110** module version, very powerful , the **D10** and D20 (the former without disc drive and sequencer), a new headphone/mike which will be useful for singing while trying to handle your tape recorder or playing at the same time, and the **MT-100** which combines the **MT-32** synth module and the basic pr-100 sequencer.

Casio as usual had five million new mini keyboards called CT-something and MT-wossname – many of them have built in drum pads now, which can sound surprisingly powerful. Also new is the **MX-134** (DM-100 in the UK) which is a sampler with two miniature-size keyboards, auto accompaniment, sample looping and so on. Incidentally, did you know that Hohner are taking many of Casio's synths, painting them white and sticking the Hohner brand on them? Just something to bear in mind if you're making the teeth-grinding decision between a Hohner HS-1 and a Casio FZ-1 (they're the same).

Also new from Casio is the **VZ10**, which is a rackmount version of their recently launched, top of the range, multi-timbral **VZ-1** synth. You can use either version to program new sounds for the utterly brilliant **PG380** synthsizer/guitar, but since that unit won't leave you much change from £900 it's a little out of our league.

Syndromic Music had just about the most impressive software selection at the show, and although they were emphasising a rather expensive system – the ST based ADAP from Hybrid Arts, which is a pro-quality sampling add-on – they had plenty to offer for the beginner. If you want to see your compositions printed out as musical scores, go for **Easy Score Plus 1.1**, a new improved version of their straightforward but powerful package; also on show was an early version of **Ludwig**, a new eight track intelligent composer, and a prototype **EditTrack**, which is a 60-channel sequencer like the existing SMPTETrack and SyncTrack but which doesn't need a hardware output box, a dongle or a key to run.

On the expensive side, we may as well mention Korg's powerful **M1** 'work station' (definitely one of the 'in' words this year) which combines a five-octave keyboard loads of sampled insturment and drum sounds with instant access, a powerful sequencer and effects into a complete composition system; and Lynex, probably the most powerful all- round add-on for the ST which for £1800 offers sixteen voices of high-quality sampling, digital mixing, and the ability to run a sequencer such as Steinberg,

FAVOURITE TOY

...at the moment is definitely the Kawai K1M. It's the tiny module version of the K1 synth and comes in at under £400 – it's multi-timbral, uses hybrid sampled/synthesized sounds, is fairly easily edited, and can produce massive split/stacked/multi-layered wodges of sound. The sheer size of Kawai's stand at the BMF probably says something about the amount of orders they've taken on their latest range, which also inclued the Q-80, a disc drive-based sequencer. The K1M is in a rather silly desk-top format at the moment, but a rack-mount version is likely to turn up later in the year.

AFFORDABLE CHEETAH

After all the techno overkill it's good to come back down to earth with Cheetah's MS6 synth module, still only 99.9% finished at the fair but probably in the shops by the time you read this. Six powerful multitimbral analog voices with front panel editing for just £349 – just what the doctor ordered. Cheetah were also showing their affordable drum kit, sequencer, drum machine, mother keyboards and software sequencer, all of which are ideal starters in their fields.

Iconix or C-Lab on the computer at the same time. C-Lab's Notator is now available and adds powerful music-scoring functions to their Creator sequencer but costs around £400 and only works on a 1040, while their **Explorer** is a much more affordable MT-32 editor.

On the recording side, both TOA and TASCAM have launched eight-track recorders using standard cassettes – they're both around £1400 unfortunately, but would be absolutely ideal for straightforward home recording.

And that just about wraps up our look at the British Music Fair. Of course there were loads of guitars, mikes, amps, effects, tape machines and accessories on show, but you can't cover everything; if you'd like an in-depth demo of any of the gear mentioned, nip along to your local dealer and make like you're actually going to spend some MONEY (this handy hint comes to you free, of charge and may save you hours of hopping from one foot to another trying to get served).

SHAMELESS PLUG!

Jenkins' favourite sequencer at the moment is Passport Master Tracks Pro, which only has one major omission – no "All Notes off" or "PANIC!!!" function so you can kill any jammed notes on your connected synths and modules. Also good fun is the cryptically titled "M", also for MCMXCIX, which is a sort of semi-intelligent comp-oser/sequencer/arpeggiator which takes your basic riffs and changes them in strange ways – great for pseudo random Philip Glass fans.

On the subject of Uncle Phil, he's playing the London Coliseum on November 30th with his CRAZEE new science fiction opera "The Making of the Representative For Planet 8" – all those into serious repetitive synth/orchestral minimalism, BE THERE. More details on 01-836-0111 extension 427.

ACE GOES TO FRANCE

Just to show you that there is life on the other side of the Channel, we took a little trip over to La Belle France a while ago to check out a major computer-synthesizer-music show , courtesy of the Yamaha Corporation of Europe. Here's a day-by-day report on the proceedings...

FRIDAY
CLEARLIGHT MESSENGERS
LIGHTWAVE

Way back in 1974, Virgin Records, riding high with the success of Mike Oldfield's 'Tubular Bells', released 'Clearlight Symphony' , an instrumental album in a not dissimilar vein by French composer Cyrille Verdeaux.

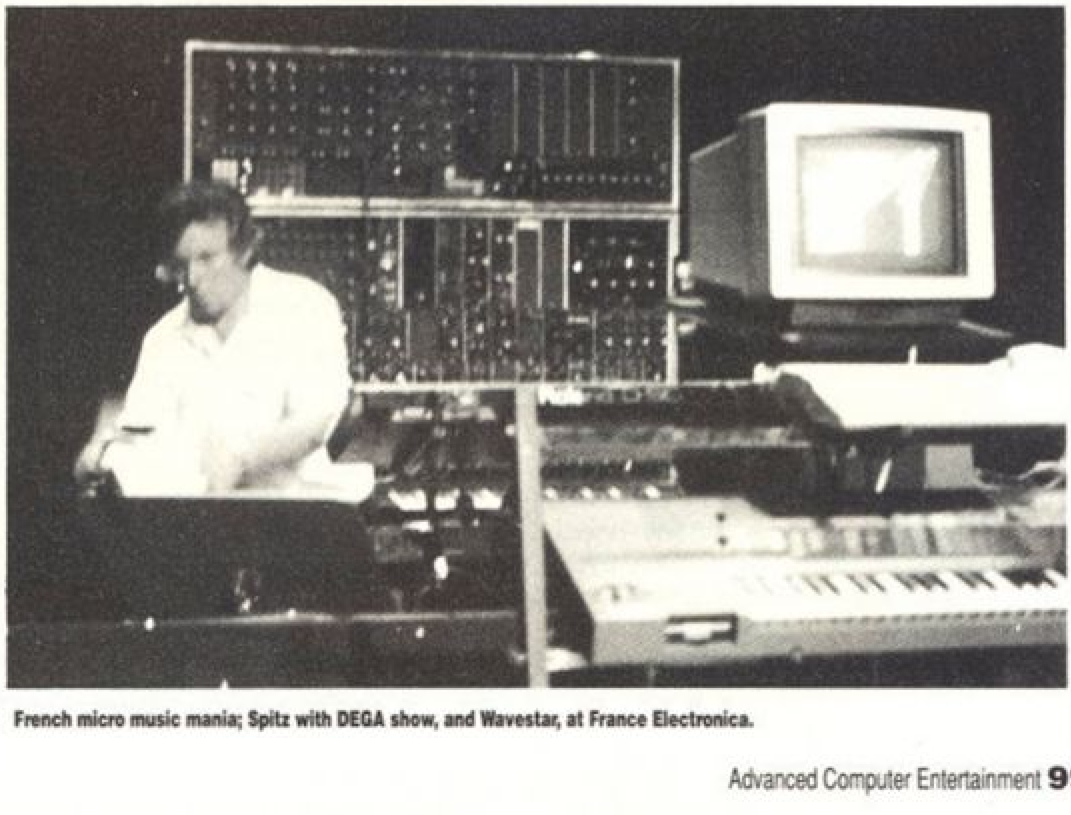
Verdeaux recently had an illuminating experience when he discovered computers. 'I've just been playing piano for years' , he explained ,'and I've only discovered computers in the last few months. It's been fantastic – I've been using Steinberg software on an ST and have completely re-arranged Clearlight Symphony. I was never very happy with the original recording because we had to do it very quickly, but now I can make sure every note is perfect and take the computer into the studio to record it in just a few hours'.

Verdeaux controlled the computer playing a Roland MT32, Tim Blake played an Emax sampler and made some of the wobbly noises he's so famous for on an old EMS synth, and Christian Boule handled the guitar parts. The performance was pretty faithful to the album, so it wasn't until afterwards that we realised the band had never rehearsed together – living in different parts of France, they'd just swapped cassettes by mail, and Boule played some of the guitar parts from a music score.

Lightwave's main influences are Tangerine Dream and Klaus Schulze. Recent exploits include a live all-night concert on FM radio where the band packed into a studio, a dance troupe wearing headsets performed in front of the Pompidou Centre, and the audience listened to the music on their Walkman headphones. Here they used a Roland MC4 MicroComposer to run a huge set of old analog synth modules, and another Atari ST was used to load new banks of sounds into another MT32 during the set.

SATURDAY
TIM BLAKE
BERND KISTENMACHER

Potted history of Tim Blake. Drops out in London and goes to France. Finds a job



French micro music mania; Spitz with DEGA show, and Wavestar, at France Electronica.

demonstrating the very early EMS synth in Paris, joins hippy band Gong, becomes one of the great MiniMoog players of all time, records loads of albums with Gong, leaves to perform solo with his synth setup dubbed 'Crystal Machine' and one of the first laser shows ever used in concert, records 'Tim Blake and the Crystal Machine' and then 'Blake's New Jerusalem', one of the greatest synth albums of all time. Drops out of the music business in disgust, buys a windmill in western France, not heard of for ten years.

Blake's comeback was pretty successful. The (by now inevitable) Atari ST running Steinberg and Roland MT32 were used to perform pretty MiniMoog and EMS. Then Blake launched into some new stuff, funky, rhythmic but spaces songs with huge brass parts on a pair of Emax sampling keyboards.

Bernd Kistenmacher from Berlin was about the only performer not using a computer on stage over the weekend , preferring to stick with Roland's MC4 MicroComposer (since Tim Blake got a couple of 'Fatal Error' messages and had to reload in the middle of his set, perhaps old Bernd had the right idea). Kistenmacher's a student of aerodynamics who got matey with Tangerine Dream and borrowed a load of their old but impressive-looking synth modules for his performance, which proceeded to go completely out of tune. Shamelessly derivative, Bernd doesn't care who knows that his influences are the Klaus Schulze albums of ten years ago, and that's exactly what we heard performed. Quite fun though...

SUNDAY

SPITZ

WAVESTAR

Technologically the most interesting band on the bill, Spitz were new to me and don't have any albums out yet. Closest point of comparison is the Art of Noise, the duo each using an ST with Steinberg, an Emax rack and two keyboard Emaxes, and various other synth modules.

Huge sequencer files allowed them to play fifteen minutes or so at a time, switching from one computer to the other when necessary and producing huge drum sounds, metallic sequences, sampled voices and much more equal ease.

Winding up proceedings, Wavestar are a duo from Sheffield supplemented by a third keyboard player on stage and sound engineer who gets to do a guest slot on guitar and vocals. The band have an album, 'Moonwind' out on an American label called Audion which deserves wider distribution in the UK, and performed several tracks from that album, plus some new stuff.

Like Lightwave, Wavestar are fans of huge old analog synth systems with lots of flashing lights, but supplement these with sequences on backing tape and with a well-mixed drum machine or two. John Dyson mainly uses older analog synths while Dave Ward-Hunt has the up-to-date Roland D50 and Paul Ward plays a Roland JX8P and an old Roland Vocoder Plus Keyboard for choir sounds.

IN CONCERT: TERRY RILEY

It's not often that a true innovator turns up in the UK, but this was the case when Terry Riley guested with the Electric Symphony Orchestra at London's Sadlers Wells Theatre in July...

Terry Riley, the ESO and computers re-inventing minimalism with 'In C'.

Riley's appearance came courtesy of the Yamaha Corporation of Europe, who have sponsored several of the ESO's recent shows. The ESO itself was formed by conductor Richard Gonski to combine the best of the classical repertoire with the latest modern technology – computers, synthesizers, lasers and graphics used on stage in a way guaranteed to shock the classical establishment.

Past shows have included a Morton Subotnik concert with a whole stack of synth modules controlled by a MacIntosh, the conductor waving a baton in one hand and an Air Drum MIDI controller in the other; a Francis Monkman epic using a DX5 synth and a whole orchestra perched on spinal support chairs; and a wide variety of fairly straight classical pieces using a little selective amplification on the orchestra.

When you take into account that the amplification alone has been enough to give the Fleet Street critics apoplexy, you'll understand why the ESO has been somewhat controversial over the last few months. But Terry Riley's pretty popular with the establishment – he virtually invented, in 1968, the movement known as Minimalism which later spawned Steve Reich and Philip Glass and which has massively influenced artists from Tangerine Dream to David Bowie and the recent Acid House hip-hop artists.

Riley's masterpiece perfomed with the ESO was "In C" , originally released on a CBS album around 45 minutes long. The score consists of 57 short musical phrases, all in the key of C; to the accompaniment of a repeated octave called 'the pulse', each musician plays the phrases in turn, but can play each one as few or as many times as he likes. That means the piece is never the same twice, and can be almost any length from 10 to 11 minutes up to this 75 minute performance and beyond.

Updating the piece involved the addition of synthesizers, keyboards, electric guitar, a Yamaha WX7 Wind Controller and various computers to the original orchestral ensemble of flutes, strings and brass. But oddly enough, the one job ideally suited to the computer – playing the repeated background pulse which occurred about 6,000 times during the course of the piece – was left to poor old Francis Monkman and his DX5 synth, which seemed rather an odd decision.

Riley, cross-legged on the floor, plonked away on a Yamaha digital piano and the whole ensemble was mixed by a pair of DMP7 digital mixers with built-in effects. These were controlled by specially-written software package, and indeed there was a software-based ST sequencer in there somewhere as well, although it wasn't entirely clear which parts it was playing.

The wind controller, patched into a TX802 FM synth module, was like the electric guitar, fairly inaudible, and when the volume did start to build, the venue's small PA didn't cope very well. A laser show which had waved about quite impressively during an earlier Beethoven piece was reduced to small squiggly graphics during Riley's performance, and there was little synchronisation between the music and the visuals.

However, the hypnotic effect of the repetitive elements in the music was hard to resist, even if the 75 minute version did seem a little protracted. Riley's only other London appearance in 25 years of music-making came a couple of years ago when he played some pieces for strangely-tuned piano, so a chance to see for a change some large-scale minimalism (if such a term makes sense) was quite welcome. Next time, though, they'd do better to leave the sound mixing to good old human beings and apply the computers rather more to the business of churning out the music.

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PILGRI

U*ltima V* has finally hit the streets – and **what a game!** Great graphics, great gameplay, great **balls of fire!** *Plus...*

- *Mortville Manor*, the game that talks back; is it **state-of-the-art** or **plain drivel**;
- Essential Myth's *Jekyll and Hyde* – double trouble for **split personalities**;
- **More adventure coverage** in our 100 Top Games of the Year feature on pages 68-71, including playing tips!

ULTIMA V

ORIGIN SYSTEMS/MICROPROSE's masterpiece

928
ACE RATED

IT'S here at last. The Pilg has been feeling pretty foolish over the last few months, constantly promising a review of this long-awaited blockbuster, but the long wait's over – and, believe me, it was worth every minute.

Ultima V sticks to the gameplay style established by the earlier games in the series, but shows enormous improvement in terms of graphic detail and depth of interest. If you play it on a PC with an EGA display, you'll probably rate it one of the most attractive programs of the moment, and most other versions promise to be every bit as good.

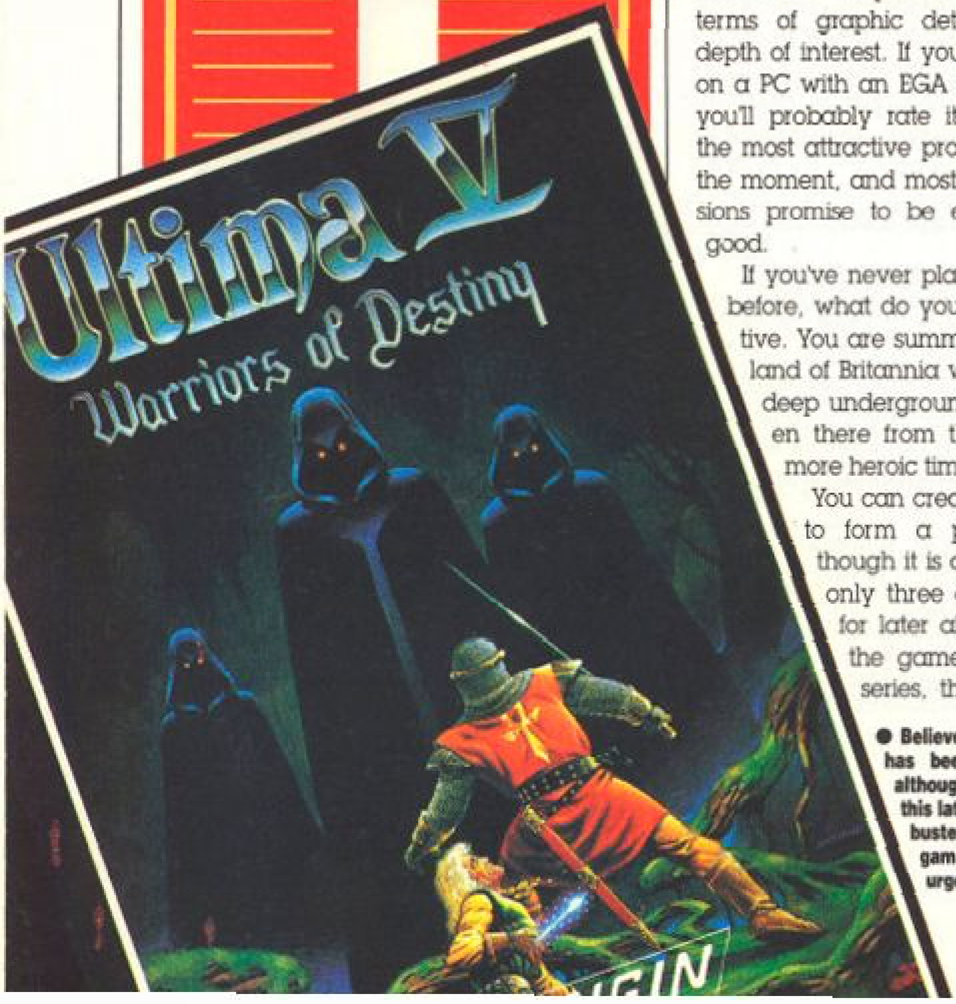
If you've never played this sort of game before, what do you get? First, the objective. You are summoned to the mythical land of Britannia where evil now festers deep underground, having been driven there from the surface in earlier, more heroic times.

You can create up to six members to form a party for the quest, though it is advisable to start with only three or four, leaving room for later alliances made during the game. In the *Bards Tale* series, this is done by 'rolling dice' for the different attributes, but in Ultima you answer a series of questions concerning the character in question. These questions are mostly concerned with matters of morality and behaviour and enable the computer to calculate certain basic attributes for the character concerned.

Once that's done, you enter the game proper. The position of your party is shown on a scrolling map as a single armed figure. Using the movement keys takes your party through forests, marshes, foothills, and all manner of terrain, seeking out villages, towns, castles and suchlike.

Entering a map feature is accomplished by moving your figure over the symbol and then hitting E for Enter. The display then changes to an overhead view of your more immediate surroundings, showing walls, doors, and other computer-controlled characters wandering about.

All commands are given using single letter key presses, though you can enter text following the **Y**ell command (which shouts out your message). You can communicate to a limited extent with characters by using the **T**alk command, which brings up a prompt. Entering keywords such as **job** or **name** can initiate a conversation, which may then be extended by further entry of keyworks taken from the other character's responses. For example, the character says 'My name is Andrew and my father's the blacksmith.' You enter **Blacksmith** and he replies 'My father is called Mario – and he's been arrested. Can



● Believe it or not, the *Ultima* series has been around since 1979...but although the basic idea is dated, this latest release is a 1990's blockbuster. If you've never played a game like this before, the Pilg urges you to try it.

MICROPROSE MILESTONE?

Ultima V comes close to joining The Hobbit, The Pawn, and Valhalla in the great hall of Adventure Milestones. Check out our Milestones Feature on page 38 for further details.

The game offers graphic detail of a sort not yet found in a program of this type, and combines it with a reasonable degree of interaction and small measure of role-playing. Together with *Bards Tale III* and *Heroes of the Lance* (to be released soon) it's all part of the fantasy gaming revolution that's making 1988 THE year for adventurers who want big, meaty games that'll keep you playing for weeks on end.

you help me?', at which the point the program may ask for a Yes/No input.

This form of communication, although limited, is vital to success in the game and some interactions can be quite lengthy. You will find yourself recruiting allies, learning passwords and mantras for use in shrines, and being set sub-tasks which, if completed, may earn you treasure, information, or simply goodwill.

Interaction with objects involves all the usual options, such as search, open, get, use, look (i.e. examine) and so on. In addition there are many nice touches – you can actually play that harpsichord over in the corner of the room by moving to it, sitting in the chair, and then hitting the number keys. Other nice touches include getting into bed to sleep, and then being thrown out by the bed's owner at three o'clock in the morning.

Time passes in the game, indicated by the passage of the sun and moon at the top of the screen and the moon even changes phase during the month – an important ingredient of certain magical rites in the game.

Magic is comprehensive with 45 spells, each of which needs a number of ingredients (e.g. garlic and ginseng) to be mixed before becoming available. Most ingredients are available from apothecaries, some have to be gathered. There are eight levels of spells, cast according to the experience level of the character concerned.

Opponents in the game range from hostile human beings to swarms of killer bees and giant squid. Combat is far more complex tactically than in the *Bards Tale* games. The display gives a close-up from overhead of the combat area, with your party in start formation (you can alter this default) and the opposing side at the top of the screen. You issue orders to each character in turn which will be dependent on the weapons they carry, their state of health, their strength, the type of enemy, and so on.

For example, in a battle against six Trolls, you might move those equipped with slings to the front and pepper the opposition with stones while the advance, then move the slingers to either side, where they can continue to attack, and advance the heavy brigade with their swords. As a general rule, it's best to equip weaker characters with long range weapons so they run less risk of getting hurt but remain useful in battle. Most characters (except fighters) have some magical expertise, but you can't mix spell ingredients during battle, so beware!

We've already seen from *Bards Tale III* how engrossing a large-scale game with a party of characters can be. *Ultima* adds greater depth of tactical detail, more interaction with objects and characters, and a more complex overall game-system. It's a winner and no self-respecting Pilgrim should be without a copy. ●

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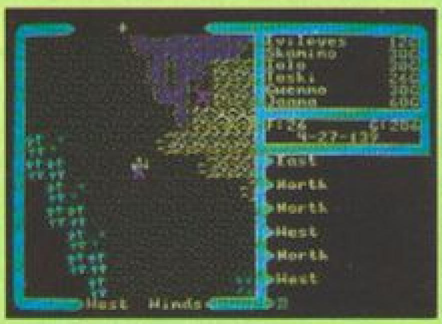
LANDSCAPE	90	SYSTEM	94
CHALLENGE	92	ENCOUNTERS	90

ACE RATING 928

DAZZLING DISPLAYS

The graphics on the *Ultima* series are built up from lots of small components or 'tiles'. Each tile combines with its fellows to depict various types of terrain or building. In addition, animated sprites are used to display the position of your party and other (usually hostile) characters. Ultima V has more different tiles than ever before, so the graphics are extremely colourful and of tremendous detail.

There are a number of different display modes, but the ones you're liable to encounter most often are the overhead countryside display, the town/village display, and the combat display.

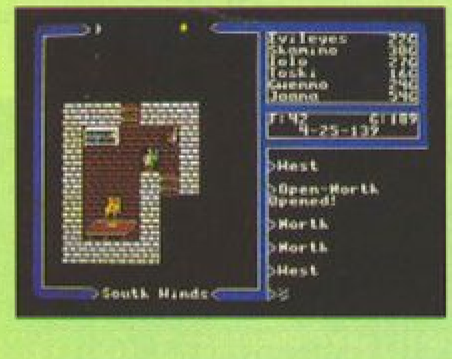


Evileyes
Shamino
Iolo
Toshi
Gwenno
Jaana
4-27-139
>East
>North
>North
>West
>North
>West
West Winds

OVERHEAD COUNTRYSIDE DISPLAY

This enables you to move around the countryside, avoid opponents, and locate towns, villages, temples and so on...

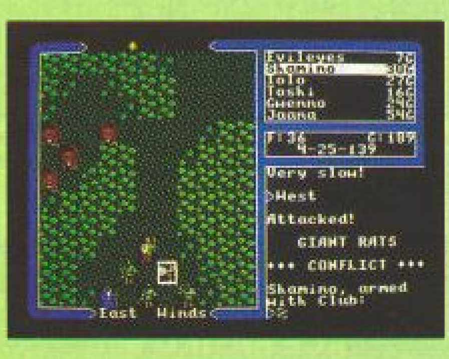
Here you're out in the countryside, during daytime. There's a strong degree of realism in the map display of *Ultima* – you can only see as much of the map as you could in real life (unless you employ magic). As night falls, your view becomes increasingly limited. Your speed of travel over the terrain is dependent on the ground your covering. High mountain ranges are completely impassable; foothills and forest slow you down, and water can only be crossed by boat. In this display mode, you will occasionally see animated sprites representing the position of adversaries. You can run in the opposite direction, but they may catch you up. This screenshot is from a CGA PC display – the rest are all from the higher-quality EGA format.



Evileyes
Shamino
Iolo
Toshi
Gwenno
Jaana
F:42 G:189
4-25-139
>West
>Open-North
Opened!
>North
>North
>West
South Winds

TOWN/VILLAGE DISPLAY

Here your party is in a room in a castle – your view is restricted to your immediate location because, of course, you can't see through the walls! Moving up to objects and people enables you interact with them.



Evileyes
Shamino
Iolo
Toshi
Gwenno
Jaana
F:36 G:189
4-25-139
Very slow!
>West
Attacked!
GIANT RATS
*** CONFLICT ***
Shamino, armed
with Club!
East Winds

COMBAT DISPLAY

During combat, you see a close up of your party and the enemy. You take it in turns to manoeuvre the individuals of your party and issue orders to them. At the end of each turn, the enemy performs its own manoeuvres. Considerable tactical skill is needed against the stronger opponents.

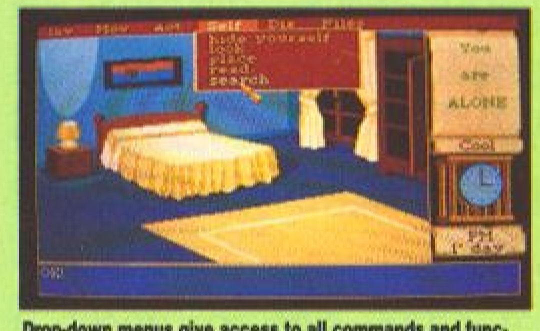
MORTVILLE MANOR

LANKHOR's pretty Franglais puzzler

THIS game has already been out for some time on the ST, but the Pilg avoided reviewing it for one simple, but compelling reason. He couldn't understand it!

That's because the game uses synthesised speech instead of text to respond to your menu-selected commands. Sometimes this speech (on the ST version) was totally unintelligible, and the game was therefore extremely awkward to play.

The Amiga version is certainly an improvement. The game features digitised sound effects of excellent quality as you move around a country mansion searching for clues to the death of a friend. You can use the mouse to single out objects within the graphic display for attention as well as invoke menus with a limited but sufficient range of common adventure commands.



Drop-down menus give access to all commands and functions, including a list of adjacent locations for you to move to.We've just opened the cupboard door on the right.

The main essence of the game comes from your communications with the other characters, whom you must interrogate continually with regard to their circumstances, motives, and history. This is done by pulling down a full-screen selection of subjects from which you choose. The character concerned may or may not answer. As you explore the game, your list of possible subjects for discussion grows.

Nice touches include doors opening on-screen as you open them in the game, excellent graphics, animated head 'n' shoulder images of your companions, and lots of objects to find. Like a number of high-tech adventures, however, this one is slightly short on locations and loses out in complexity of scenario where it gains in complexity of presentation. ●

RELEASE BOX		
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No other versions planned		

LANDSCAPE	89	SYSTEM	79
CHALLENGE	93	ENCOUNTERS	90
ACE RATING 745			

JEKYLL AND HYDE

Are ESSENTIAL MYTH schizophrenic?

GREAT idea for an adventure, this – the hideous exploits of Dr Jekyll who, believing in the dual nature of man, finds himself split into two personalities: himself, and the evil Mr Hyde.

Essential Myth are a small independent adventure programming house who've been going for some time and whose best known game is probably *Book of the Dead* (published by CRL). This latest game was produced using PAW and is an excellent example of what can be done with a good utility and a bit of extra work on the side.

The game loads in three parts, which must be played and solved sequentially. The first part is tough enough as you take dinner with your friends and attempt to bring to fruition the months of research. The second two parts are extremely tough. The puzzles never, however, degenerate into the illogical or the irrational, which endeared the game to the pilg, although he didn't get very far with it in the time available!

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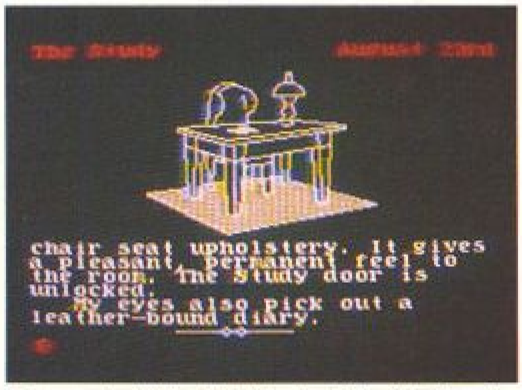
An attractive character set, simple illustrations, and an excellent prose style make this an impressive game for such a small company. Any larger companies looking for a source of quality adventure software might consider giving them some support. In the meantime, the title can be ordered from EM at: 54 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Glos, GL20 5RZ. At up to £12.95, it seems just a little on the expensive side to me, but the company insist that 'the pricing structure for the game is justified; the game took 6 months to write and test and due to the limitations of PAW quite a lot of the program had to be programmed outside of the utility.' Hmmm...Well, at least I can say that I had no complaints on grounds of quality! ●



```
chair seat upholstery. It gives
a pleasant, permanent feel to
the room. The Study door is
unlocked.
    My eyes also pick out a
leather-bound diary.
```

The screen in Jekyll and Hyde looks a little old-fashioned, but don't be fooled. The game's tough and the atmosphere gripping.

LANDSCAPE	58	SYSTEM	65
CHALLENGE	88	ENCOUNTERS	66
ACE RATING 695			

INFOCOM GO MAD!

Not nuts, that is, but right over the top with a string of astounding new titles!

The first is *Journey*, a role-playing epic with a party of five characters up against the powers of evil with you in command. The games written by Marc Blank of *Zork* fame and features menu command structure, puzzles, prose, music, and – gasp – graphics! Ooooh, let's hope they get it right! The magic of an Infocom game combined with the involvement of role-playing could be a wonderful combination. They came near it with *Beyond Zork*, but you could go so much further...

Then there's *Shogun*, based on James Clavell's blockbusting novel set in 16th Century Japan and adapted by Dave Lebling, another veteran Infocom games designer.

Finally, you've got *Zork Zero* – a 200+ location mega-quest with 'more puzzles than the original *Zork* series put together'. Written by Steve Meretsky of *Leather Goddesses* fame, the adventure sounds like a mad frenzy of lunacy as you explore the early days and by-ways of the Great Underground Empire. The company also say it will have 'graphical puzzles'. Well, we've been expecting this for some time now. Wonder what the reality will be like...

What's good about this announcement is that there's something for everybody. It looks as if, after messing around with different formats, Infocom are going to stick to the subject areas and techniques they do best, while at the same time drawing in ideas from other game types. Watch this space...

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ACE • LETTERS

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

Why are BBC games cheaper than ST or Amiga ones? What have the 520ST's new disk drive, the Amiga 500's price cut and Arcana's updated Amiga *Powerplay* got in common? And what would happen if everyone played the same game all at once? You come up with the tough ones, Andy Wilton struggles to answer them and ACE doles out the prizes.

• WAR NO MORE

I'm sick of the Commodore-Spectrum superiority war. This was going on in magazines FOUR YEARS AGO! It's a waste of time, paper and space. When I bought a BBC and sold my Spectrum people called me a traitor! Now that I'm selling my BBC for an Amiga, I'm getting the same thing. In issue 11 of ACE, S. Hutchings moaned about Commodore users slagging off the Spectrum, then proceeded to do the same thing to other computers. What's the point in writing to complain about others slagging computers off when you do it yourself?

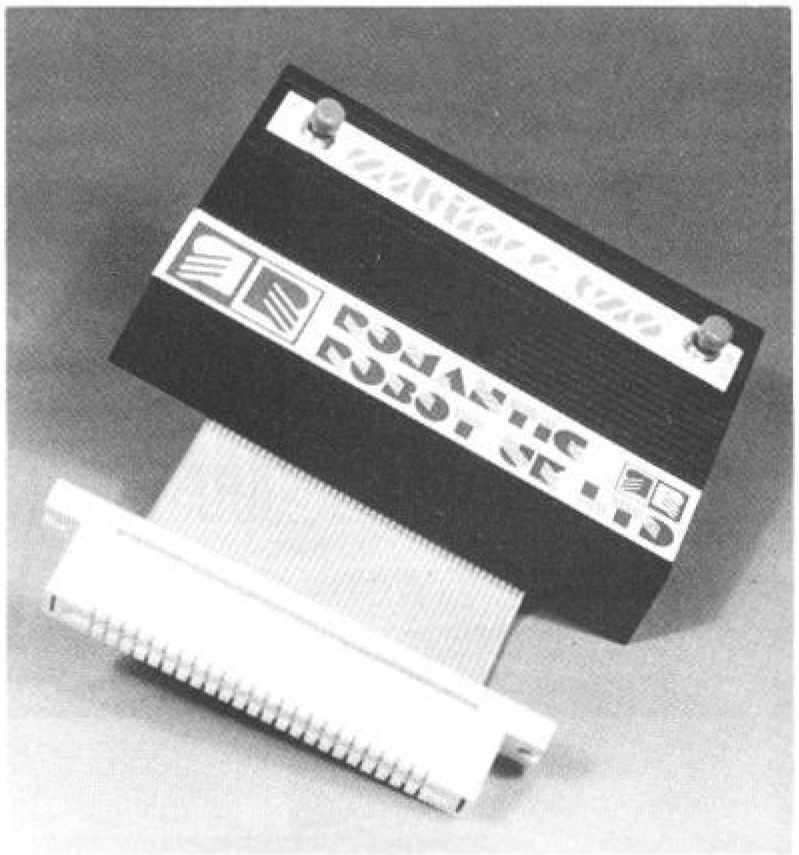
Another thing I'm going to go on about is the ridiculous price of Amiga and ST games. All the mags say that it's because of the small user-base, but this is a load of rubbish. Superior Software bring out a high-quality game every month for the BBC and Electron, and they are all normal price and original (they wrote Thrust and produced *Zarch*) yet a top-selling BBC game like *Psycastria* would hardly register on a Gallup chart. How do they do it when people like Rainbird cannot? A £25 game simply would not sell on the BBC.

Russell Jackson
Nottingham

You've just about answered your own question on software pricing, Russell. A BBC game wouldn't sell for £25, but ST and Amiga games can and do. It's precisely because sales of Beeb games are so low and high prices aren't tolerated that the big software houses stay well clear of the market, leaving it to the dedicated few like Superior. As a result, the ST and Amiga get far more support and thus make better games machines (quite apart from their greater power). Incidentally, if I'm not much mistaken, Beeb Thrust and Archie Zarch from Superior cost pretty much the same as their ST equivalents from Silverbird and Firebird respectively!

• IT'S A RIP-OFF

I used to own a Speccy +3 and I also bought a Multiface 3 with it. This proved very useful when I



SIDEWINDER EXPLANATION

PRIZE LETTER

Michael Griffiths (Letters, ACE issue 11) probably has the same version of the Amiga 500 as I have, a USA model. What has to be remembered is that all computer manufacturers slightly modify their components if any faults are found, and so there are sometimes changes in timing and the like. *Sidewinder* is a typical example. Probably it'll work on all British models of the Amiga because Commodore altered the graphics chip ever so slightly, maybe to improve the picture on a PAL television set. You mentioned that *Sidewinder* works on one of the Amigas in the ACE office but not the other – is one a USA model and the other a GB model? (You can tell the difference because the GB Amigas have horrible keys and also the keyboard layout is different. GB machines have quotation marks on the 2 key and a pound sign on the 3 key as well as some other changes.)

Chris Clifford
Neath, West Glamorgan

Uncanny! You're spot on as far as ACE's Amiga's go, Chris. The USA model (with @ on the 2 key) doesn't like Sidewinder, *while the GB model (with quotes on the 2 key) runs it perfectly. Manufacturers certainly do change hardware details during long production runs, and* Sidewinder *obviously falls foul of that here. We already knew about an earlier change from the A1000's video chips – they didn't support the 64-colour extra-half-bright mode, for one thing – but this was a new one on us. The moral, if there are any programmers out there, is to test your software on both machines before releasing it.*

GET IN ON THE ACTION!

Make your point, air your views, or just practice your joined-up writing in a mighty missive to the letters pages that matter. Write to:

ACE Letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ

wanted to swap copies of games with friends or hack a game apart. I was sorry to have to sell it with my +3 in favour of buying an ST.

Now though, I have heard rumours of a Multiface ST. However, I have also heard rumours of horrible bugs in their games to stop you copying them. Are these rumours true? Would it be a waste of money buying it if you could be slowly wrecking you ST?

Anon (for his own good)
Cranbrook, Kent

If software houses put anti-copying routines into their games, good for them! I'm a big fan of Multiface as a tool for exploring and learning from people's code - and possibly tweaking it to make life easier! - but piracy cheats the programmers out of money for their work, and that's wrong. For the umpteenth time, if you don't like the game enough to pay for it, play something else! (And at the risk of stating the obvious, it would be a waste of money buying any *device which slowly wrecked your ST - though I rather doubt Romantic Robot would sell anything that did!)*

● TOO ADDICTIVE?

After reading your articles on advanced multi-user adventures I thought 'Wow, do something, try harder to get some money for an Amiga and equipment.' But as I was drooling about this another thought came into my head: what about addiction? C64 games are mega-addictive as they are, and other 8-bitters will agree that game-playing doesn't help the social life. So what'll happen when I start playing MUGs? As it is I only watch the news on TV, I read few books and I don't go out very often. Will I even be able to leave the screen?

Don't get me wrong, I eagerly await cheap international MUGs. But when the majority of users are 16-bit owners, the graphics and gameplay will have some awesome realism and addiction. There'll have to be a restriction on times when people can log on. Otherwise, imagine what would happen if one day

UNGRATEFUL OR UNFAIRLY TREATED?

I said it in Issue 11's ACE Letters and I'll say it again here: people don't actually like improvements. The increase in the 520ST's drive capacity, the drop in price of the Amiga A500 and the improved Amiga version of Arcana's Powerplay have all been causing varying degrees of annoyance, rightful indignation or fearful wrath. Are these people the victims of injustice or just a bunch of moaning minnies? You decide!

● I am writing to agree wholeheartedly with the view of Mr Lattimore (Letters, ACE issue 12) regarding the price rises and cuts of the Atari 520ST. Now that it has been announced that the price will probably be cut by £100 again, this gives his theory even more credence. I'm sure there are a lot of retailers and purchasers angry at Atari's tactics in the marketing arena.

I am sorry to admit that I fell for their marketing ploy of March/April. I bought a 520STFM (1/2 Meg drive) for £299 when the £100 price increase was announced. Many others probably did the same, thinking they couldn't afford this great machine after such a large price rise. But Atari neglected to mention the 1 Meg drive in the higher price machine. And now the price is set to drop again but probably still with the 1 Meg drive! There are a lot of people left with a sour taste in their mouth and probably a lot of retailers left with 1/2 Meg machines to get rid of at a loss. Maybe Atari have assured their market share over Commodore but I for one am not enamoured with their tactics.

Colin Jubb
Edinburgh

You're not the only one to feel peeved over this one judging by our mailbag Colin, but I think I'd better straighten out a few points. Firstly the £100 price cut has not been officially confirmed. The general industry feeling is that Atari will have to make the cut, precisely because they have not assured their market share over Commodore and risk losing it altogether if they stay at £399.

Secondly, R J Lattimore's interpretation of the facts does cast Atari in just about the worst light possible. Even if the cynical explanation turns out to be the right one here that still means the ST'll be better value than ever once the dust settles. Small consolation for people caught in the middle, I know, but there it is. (There is a strong case for saying that Atari should pick one model and stick with it, thus avoiding all this hassle in the first place - but that's another story.)

● I read with great interest in the August ACE that Commodore have dropped the price of the Amiga A500 to £399. May I just point out to any Commodore management executives reading this that the A500 has achieved its present degree of success not because they have created a brilliant computer but because thousands of people like me have spent £499+. Who gets the benefit of this offer? Not the people who deserve it, current A500 owners, but either the people who couldn't afford one (fair enough) or those who were not convinced the A500 was that much better than the ST.

MAYBE I'm wrong.
MAYBE Commodore are working on it.
MAYBE Commodore are going to offer all registered owners a free 500K expansion or £100 worth of software vouchers or a second disk drive.

N Bessey
Kessingland, Suffolk

At the risk of making myself unpopular, I think you're being a bit unreasonable here. If you buy a toaster, car, television or washing machine, you swap a sum of money for the goods in question on the understanding that they work properly. Whether they're worth the money, might be cheaper if you wait a bit or cost £10 less somewhere else is your problem. The only difference with a computer is that a price cut means more machines get sold, there's more software support for them, and everyone benefits.

● I wouldn't usually write in to a magazine, even less to lodge a complaint. I am referring to the advertisement and news story on the impending release of Arcana's Powerplay. It waffled on about 'Amiga owners not being satisfied...-', 'Uses full potential' etc. Cor, wow, whoopee and other sarcastically orientated words - but wait! Haven't we already seen the release of said Amiga Powerplay? And didn't your magazine do a big promotional deal with it? And more importantly, didn't I buy it? YES.

I'm not one to pass up the chance to buy great games, but when a software house like Arcana decides to blatantly rip off all and sundry with a sub-standard game it does rather raise the blood cells. How can Arcana supply an average game to thousands and then bring out the 'proper' Amiga version, slagging off the first version and asking people to buy the better one.

I'm sure I speak for thousands of others in asking IS ARCANA PREPARED TO COMPENSATE US FOR THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST ORIGINAL *POWERPLAY?* ARE THEY PREPARED TO EXCHANGE OUR COPIES WHICH THEY SO CLEARLY MUST HAVE REALISED WERE GOING TO BE REPLACED WITH AN IMPROVED VERSION?

I hope you can answer my queries as I don't like being dumped with an out of date game.

Anthony Hicks
Deal, Kent

I don't think your being very fair to Arcana there, Anthony. I should think most people would applaud them for taking so much extra effort over the new Amiga version, especially given that they already had a great version they could sell instead. I don't think for a moment that Arcana planned to make the first version obsolete when they launched it, or that they expected people to buy the second version to replace it. They're just trying to offer new users an even better no-one went to school or work because they were all fighting each other on an intercontinental MUG!

Patrick Degenaar
Newry, Co. Down

A worrying thought indeed Patrick, but not half as terrifying as the phone bills would be! You've pointed out a more immediate problem than either of these two, mind you: how can your social life survive computer addiction? Anyone else got any thoughts on staying sociable in the micro era?

THAT DAMNED ELUSIVE SEGA MICRO

PRIZE LETTER

We seek it here, we seek it there, we ACE folks seek it everywhere! Remember the 4-year-old Sega home micro mentioned by Apple-loving Australian reader John Thornley in his letter last month? Well the plot's been thickening nicely since then. For starters, R.Henderson of Liverpool sent us a clipping on the subject plus a few tasty technical details (and won himself a prize into the bargain!):

Way back in 1984, issue 27 of the Home Computer Advanced Course carried a review of the Sega SC3000H machine.

The computer was equipped with 8K RAM (expandable to 48K), 16K video RAM and 18K ROM. The BASIC was held on a ROM cartridge very much like the old Atari machines. Graphics were quite good for the time, a special chip gave 256x192 resolution, a 24x40 text screen and 16 colours. There were also sprites and six sound channels.

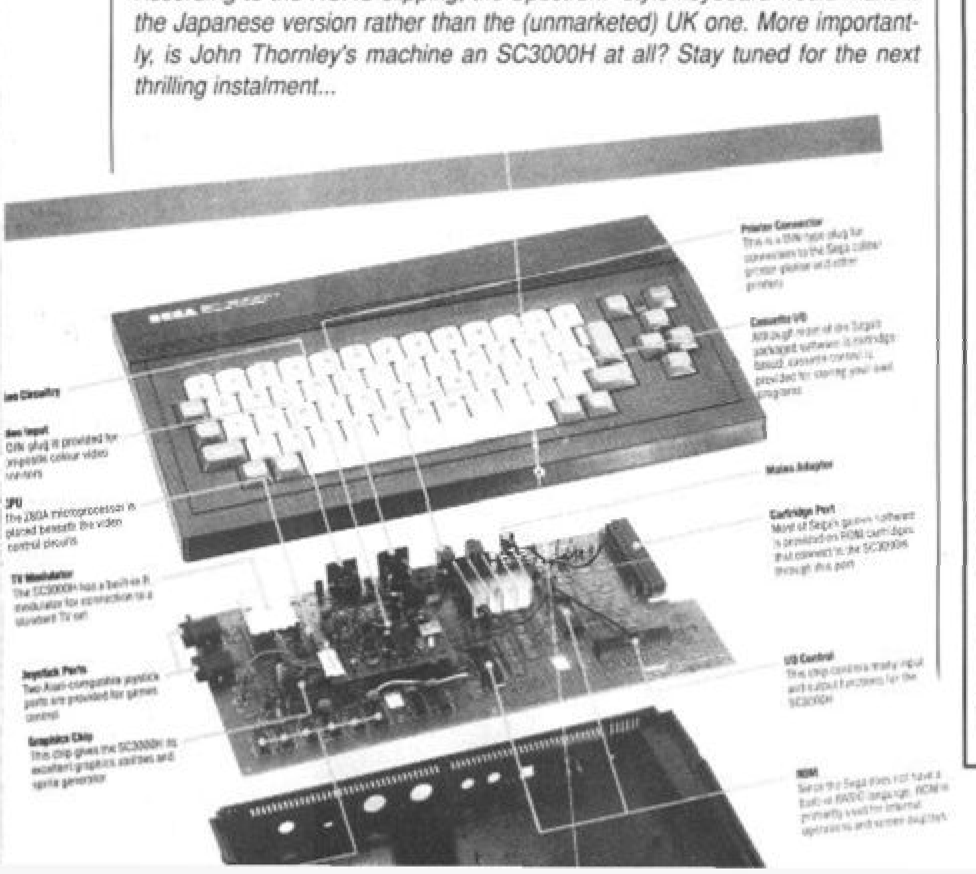
Points of interest:

...though Z80-based, the SC3000H clearly wasn't an MSX machine. 'All MSX machines had Microsoft BASIC built in,' pointed out Trowbridge MSX fan and Code Masters programmer Phillip Oliver. 'Besides, it would have 'MSX' in big letters all over it if it was. Actually we saw a Sega micro in a shop in Germany last year: it looked just like a Spectrum. In fact, I think it even had keywords above the keys.'

Curiouser and curiouser.

Ariolasoft, German distributors of the Sega console, knew nothing about a Sega micro being sold there (and were pretty sure they'd know about it if it was, what's more). Neither did Manfred Kleimann, editor-in-chief of ACE's fave German computer mag Aktuelle Software Markt. 'A real home micro? Not just a console? No, I've never heard of that one.'

Did the Olivers just see an old model being sold off cheap then? According to the HCAC clipping, the Spectrum- style keyboard would make it the Japanese version rather than the (unmarketed) UK one. More importantly, is John Thornley's machine an SC3000H at all? Stay tuned for the next thrilling instalment...



ODDS AND ENDS

Tidbits from this month's mailbag

First a public service message: Christine Bennett of Stockport would like to tell us about the TI99/4A Users Group (UK), which is 'a thriving users club run by TI owners all over the country.' *The man to contact, it seems, is their Membership Secretary:*

Peter Walker
24 Bacons Drive
Cuffley
Herts
EN6 4DU
Tel (0707) 873778

All sorts of hurtful, sarcastic remarks spring to mind here, most of them referring to the probable number of TI99/4A users actually reading this, but there's no call to be mean. Besides, there's more mail to get through!

CODE PROG

Stephen Sayers of Lydney, Glos., sent us an ACE card recoder program. The idea is that you type in your ACE card number and the program turns out the four-letter code equivalent to it. That way you can just look through the list of codes in each issue without having to type them in. It's intended to 'make life easier for anyone typing in or using the ACE decoder program,' says Stephen - and it probably would at that, if we hadn't changed the code generation system and published a new decoder program last issue. Well heck, we've got to keep you busy somehow! Anyway, the upshot is that Stephen's program doesn't work anymore. It's a tough life, folks.

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● SUB STORY

'Does anyone out there who has played "Interceptor" know how to sink that damned 'shadow sub'. I've been stuck on this mission for days and it's getting on my wick.'

Harry Theochari
Harrow

Well Harry, we've managed to complete that final mission without sinking the sub, simply by shooting down an awful lot of other things including the cruise missile it launches. Whether this is a bug or a game feature we aren't sure, but bear in mind that you don't actually have to turn those Falcons back on the 'heist' mission. In other words, mission briefings aren't always accurate!

● DRIVING HIM INSANE?

Garrick Darts of Baldock, Herts., finds that some games reset while he's playing them, and reckons it's his Amiga 500's drive that's to blame. 'Please help - I'm going mad!' *he burbles. Well Garrick, if they're resetting halfway through it doesn't really sound like a drive problem. But whatever the cause it clearly needs sorting, so take steps to have it repaired under guarantee by taking it back to the dealer you bought it from.*

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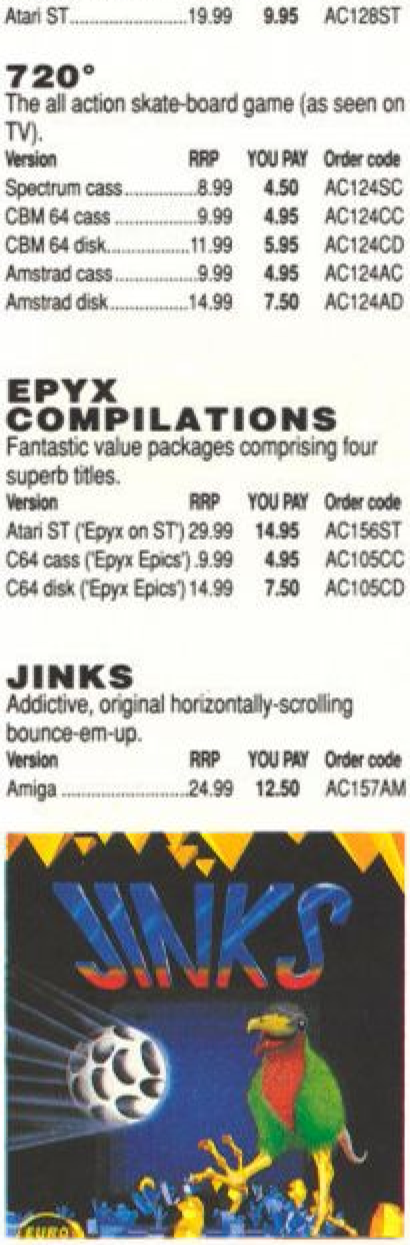

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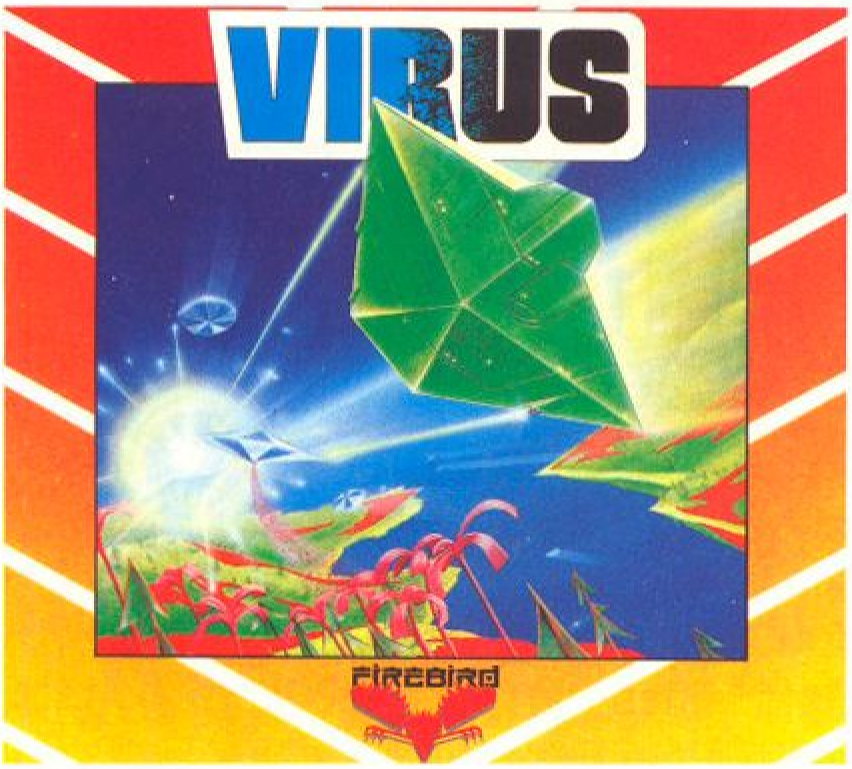

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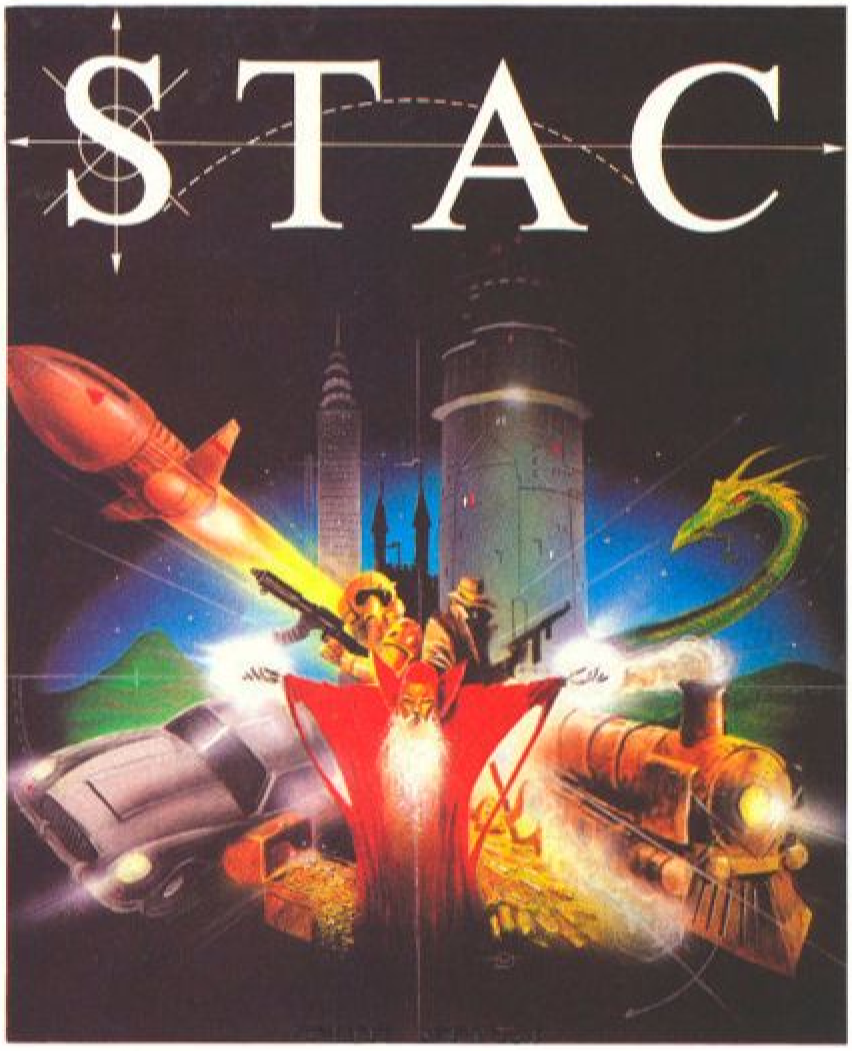

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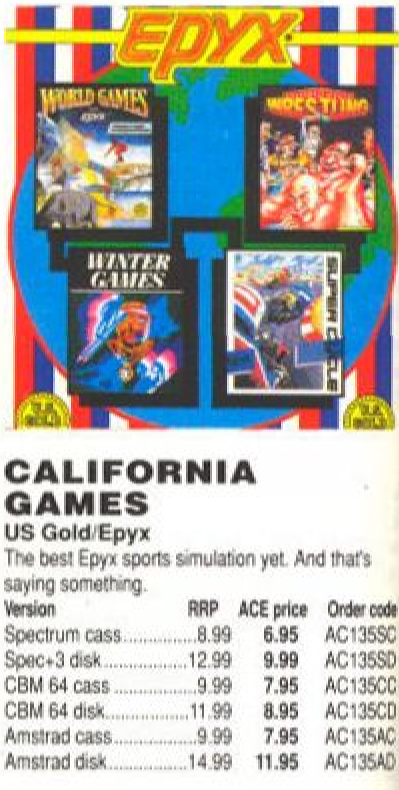

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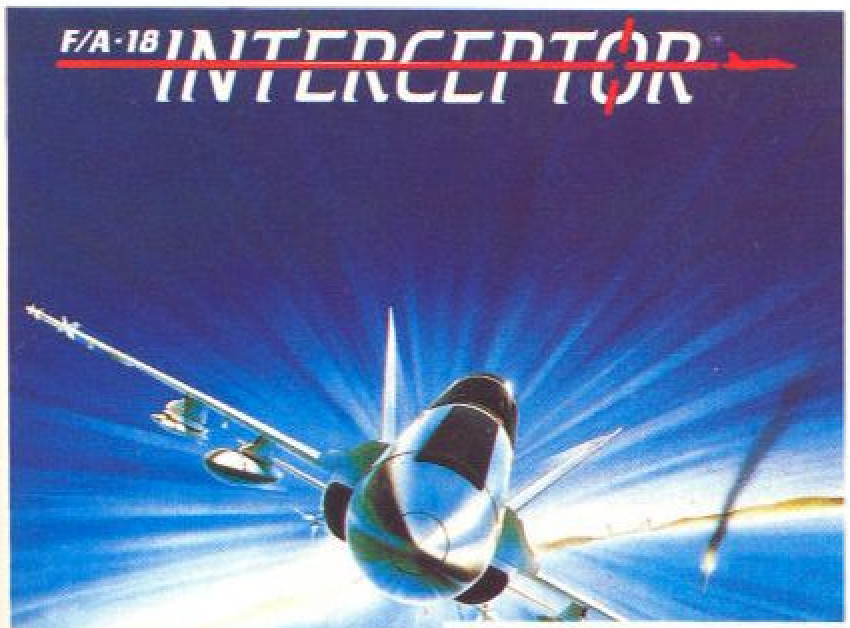

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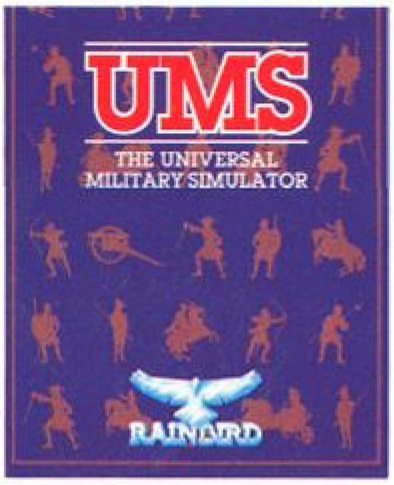

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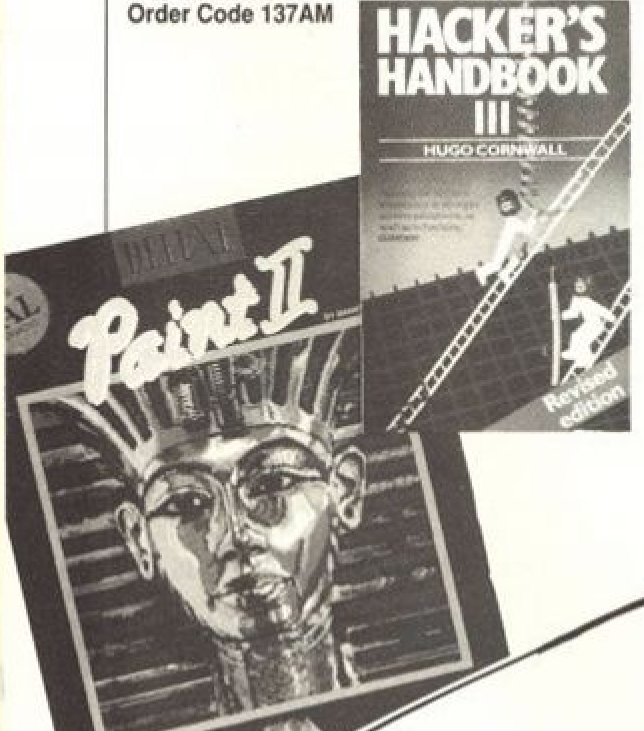

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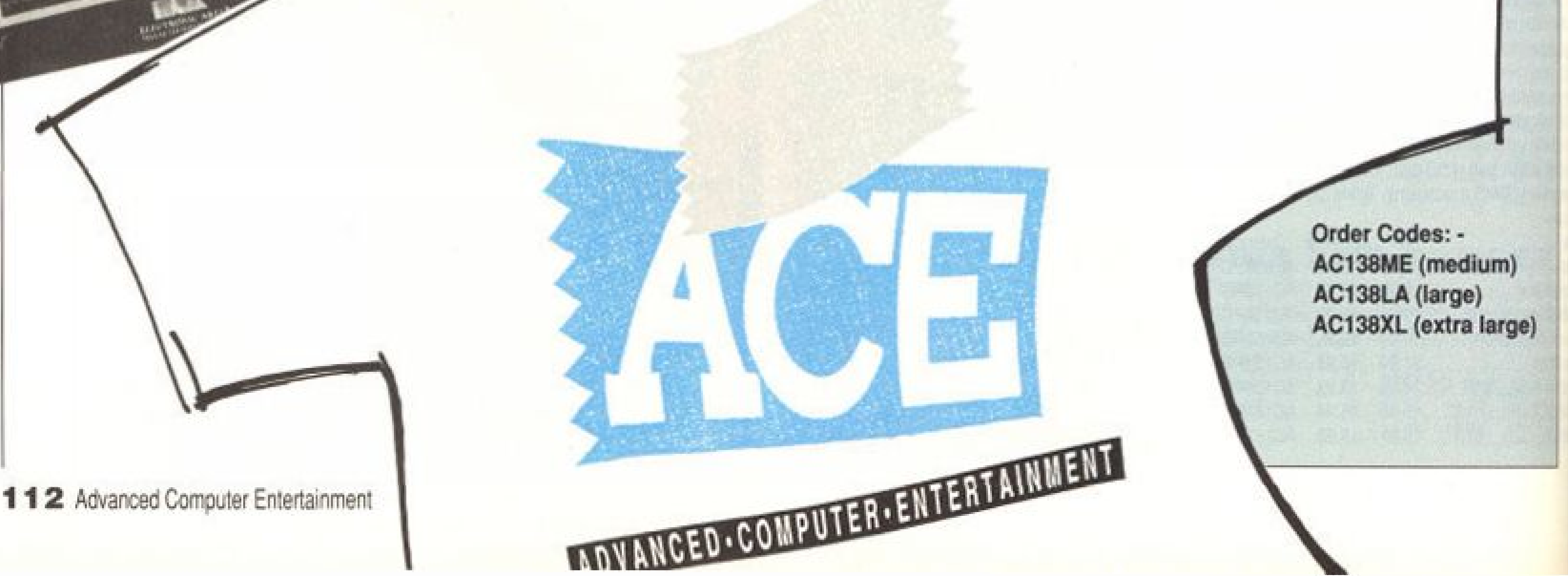

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BOTTOMS UP!

Fantasy hits the Trolls'Bottom this month as Tony Ross checks out the latest PBM offerings....

Fantasy is the subject this month, starting with a fun game from KJC games.

TROLL'S BOTTOM

KJC GAMES

Somewhere far from any land is the rarely-seen island of *Troll's Bottom*, so named because of the creatures that live there. Trolls are ugly, strong, always hungry beasts whose purpose in life is to clear all other trolls from the island, and prepare it for a honeymoon.

The island is made up of 400 holes, all quite shallow at the start. Trolls move from hole to hole on the surface or underground through connecting tunnels which can only be made once a hole has been dug deep enough.

Life is simple though not really idyllic. Trolls move around hunting for food, digging holes & tunnels, spying on each other, and sometimes robbing or fighting. Each troll has a pet vulture that flies around locating other other trolls and carrying food and weapons to them.

Making life awkward are Giant Eagles, Balrogs and burrowing Moonworms. Balrogs are the worst as they are easily offended and will retaliate by commanding trolls to kill the offender. Woe to any that dare disobey! Moonworms dig tunnels between holes which gets messy if any of the holes have hot lava in them...

Every Troll uses some of his strength in doing actions and these can affect his *build* and *sanity*. At one extreme there is a dangerously insane limbless cripple, at the other a dangerously sane hysterically happy troll.

Winning the game is straight-forward. Just be the last survivor. What has happened in my game (no names, no pack drill...) is that several trolls have ganged up together and gone round killing off solitary trolls. I had a couple of allies but they got bumped off, followed shortly by me! My ghost, (well my Troll's Ghost) now inhabits hole 213. Of course, I'm out of the game.

Players of It's A crime will feel at home with the order system. It uses single letter orders and players can do a single or double turn costing £1.00 or £1.50. It costs nothing to join and the first two turns are free.

Originally, Troll was run by Project Basilisk, but was then bought by KJC Games who moved it from Amstrad PCWs onto PCs, adding new features on the way. It should soon have a bit more including a travelling Wizard who doesn't like noisy trolls.

There's a lot of humour in Troll but I'm not so sure that serious PBMers will go for it. This is not a game for the dangerously sane player!

COMPLEXITY	**4**	**ENJOYMENT**	**7**
PRESENTATION	**7**	**SKILL**	**5**
ACE RATING 6			

DARK BLADES

STANDARD GAMES PBM

Continuing the fantasy theme is *Dark Blades*, by a company better known for its range of combat boardgames – *Cry Havoc*, for example. This is Standard's first sally into PBM and they have retained the colourful presentation from their boardgames, by providing an illustrated box and A3 colour map.

The island of Labrynthia is the setting for a clash between mankind and the half-breed race of Mon-Ogres. Both races loathe each other so much that they will fight to the death when together. Players choose either race and can be a party of 3 warriors or a trader in charge of a village.

Warriors wander the island recruiting new characters to their party, fighting, doing jobs for traders and generally becoming more powerful.

Traders spend the time developing their village, deciding production & prices, looking after the population and running mule trains to other villages for trading. Parties can be hired to guard the mule train or attack other villages & settlements.

So far in my village, things have been tranquil. I'm a human trader and I've just ordered crops planted. There havn't been any visitors yet but we've hung out the welcome signs, sent messengers out announcing our opening sale and are now awaiting the stampede.

Graphically the printouts are probably the best I've seen in any game. A lot of thought has gone into them, from the hexagonal map & terrain features (shades of *Vorcon Wars* here) to the price list which is surrounded by a castle.

If I have a criticism, it is that the game starts too slowly. As it costs £5.00 to join, I think a lot of players will stay in to see what happens but I'm still waiting for exciting things. It seems there are several quests to perform and I'm looking forward to these.

For £1.25 a turn it looks interesting and seems good value. Its been running since March, and Standard have changed things a little to accommodate players wishes.

There is even a gold plated dragon worth £1000 as a prize. On present playing, I don't think there is much danger of me winning it!

COMPLEXITY	**7**	**ENJOYMENT**	**6**
PRESENTATION	**9**	**SKILL**	**7**
ACE RATING 7			

ADDRESSES

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PBM NEWS

Mitre Games, one of the bigger UK PBM companies has gone into liquidation after making bad trading losses. Mitre ran games like *Global Supremacy*, *Tribes of Crane* & *Midgard* and had a couple of thousand players.

As far as I can tell, Mitre are trying to sell these games off to pay debts and have someone else continue running them. If someone buys them, perhaps they could let us know at ACE. It's to be hoped that players get some of their money back if the games don't continue.

Some of Mitre's games were so complicated that fees of 30 pounds for a turn were not unusual!

Casus Belli, the military strategy game formerly run by No-Dice games in N. Ireland has now been taken over by KJC Games and restarted. It had run into processing difficulties and many players had not received a turn for over three months. KJC are also working on a new 100-player version, but will continue running the original until the games finish.

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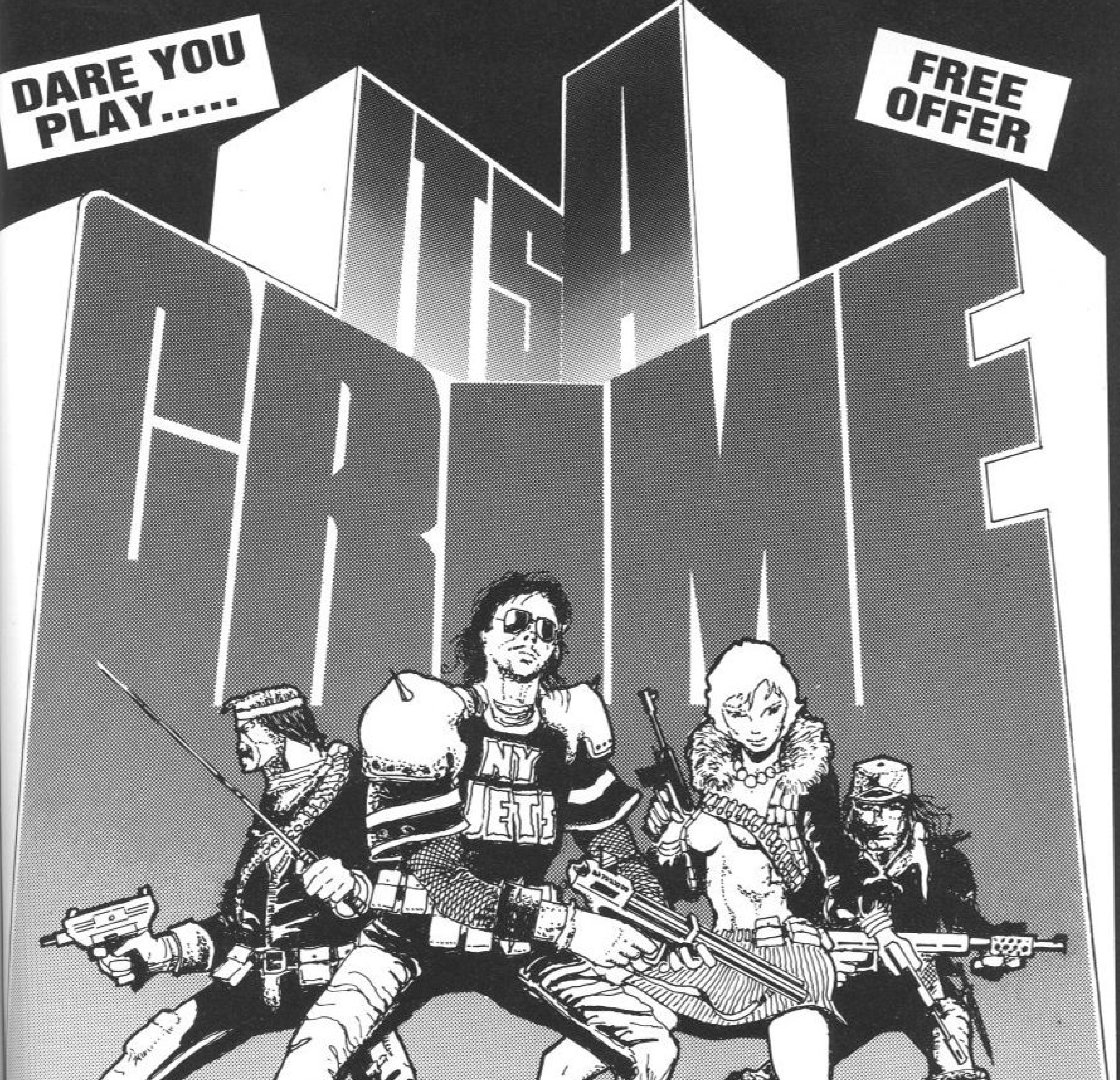

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CATCH 32

The power micros are on their way – but will anyone buy them when they get here? And will the software industry support them, come to that? *Arthur King* reports on how the Acorn Archimedes, the world's first 32-bit home micro, is shaping up as an entertainment machine one year after its launch. Meanwhile, *Andy Wilton* ponders the implications for the new generation of heavyweights just over the horizon...

When tough-talking Atari boss Jack Tramiel first came out with his famous 'bangs per buck' slogan, the Archimedes was no more than a blueprint on an Acorn drawing board. If Jack had seen it coming he might have kept his mouth shut, because three years down the line the Archie offers something like twice the power-to-price ratio of the ST. Does that mean Atari are living in fear of the coming 32-bit era? Very far from it, of course: for all its high performance, one year after launch there are probably fewer than one tenth as many Archies in the UK as there are STs, and the gap isn't narrowing. Why not?

Well, the Archie may be more powerful than anything Atari or Commodore have on offer just at the moment, but after a year of price fluctuations it still costs more than an ST and an Amiga *put together*. Its £800 price tag makes Acorn's 32-bit wonder tremendous value for money, but there simply aren't very many people with that much spare cash to spend on a micro. The last home machine to succeed in the UK market at that price would have been the Commodore PET or Apple II way back before the ZX80 came out, and it really wasn't a very big market back then. Work out what £800 would get you in video equipment or foreign holidays and you can see why!

The other big factor involved here, of course, is software support. The newer a machine is, the less familiar programmers are with it – and that's bound to be reflected in the software quality. Add to that the fact that a new – and particularly an expensive new – micro can't have a very large user base as yet, so software houses are less inclined to publish those programs that do get written.

GROWING PAINS

To an extent these are just the problems that any new machine has. The ST took a long time to come through against existing machines like the C64. Such early ST software as did come along was usually pretty unimpressive in terms of the machine's capabilities, with the outstanding titles – things like *Starglider* and *The Pawn* – seeming pretty tame by today's standards. The Amiga was the same: it's taken almost three years to come through from prototypes to the repackaged, cut-price, commercially successful, 'supported' A500 of today – and it's still not decisively won out.

Viewed in perspective, though, this process -programmers learning a machine, users buying it in numbers and big business moving in to support it – all seems to be taking longer for each new machine. The Amiga had a close architectural similarity to the ST as a boost, and even the ST managed to trade off the defunct QL software base to a degree, but still it all took a long time to work its way through. As we move into the age of power micros using brand new *RISC* (Reduced Instruction Set Chip) technology, this could drag out still further.

It's not just that the chips are new and unfamiliar (though they are). It's also that micros today are vastly more complex than those of the great 1983-4 computer boom, at least if you're trying to program them well.

IN FUTURE

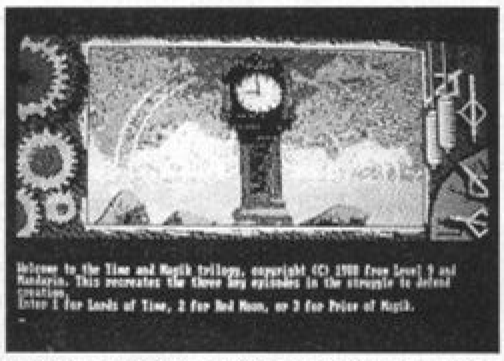
Various estimates put the number of Archies in use up above the 10,000 mark and growing steadily, but this is still small potatoes compared to either the ST or Amiga. To make matters worse, a large proportion of these are in schools or colleges where they're very unlikely to be used for running entertainment software. This means that games royalties are low compared to other formats, and being tough to convert they aren't really commercial propositions for programmers.

Software houses feel much the same way: Superior Software boss Richard Hanson spoke out recently over disappointing sales of *Zarch* and *Conqueror* – this despite the high proportion of Archie owners they reached. Quite simply, the market isn't big enough for the big boys to move in, and while the machine remains so expensive that'll probably remain the case.

If the Archie badly needs a price cut, most people would say it doesn't really need either greater speed or more memory – but it's about to get both. Next year a new version of the ARM will appear complete with an 'on-chip instruction cache', a clever little feature which could boost its performance substantially. There's also the prospect of an update to MEMC, the Archie's memory controller, so that it can cope with more than the current 4Mb maximum. These point to a movement upmarket, with Acorn aiming to take on high-performance workstation manufacturers like Sun and Apollo. What a shame: the ARM chip-set could power an amazing arcade machine!

PLAYING POSSUM

The Archie could be the hottest games machine out there bar none, but at time of writing you could count the number of commercially released games for it on the fingers of one hand. Since its launch over a year ago now the Archimedes has spawned just eight titles: *Zarch, Conqueror, Hoverbod* (an arcade adventure slightly reminiscent of *Starquake*), *Minotaur, Missile Control, Quazer, Alerion* (a recently released *Xevious* style shoot-em-up) and a budget pack from Fazzsoft.



This is the PC version of *Time and Magik* (Mandarin) but it still runs fine on the Archie thanks to PC emulation. Clever stuff!

Only about half of these would pass as full-price products on the ST or Amiga. Some of them are written in Basic and only suffer slightly from it, which says something about the maturity of the market but also hints tantalisingly at the Archie's raw power.

Don't get the impression that the games scene is completely stagnant: Grand Slam have promised full support for the Archie starting with a conversion of *Terramex*, while Superior are working on what they claim will be the ultimate *Repton*-style mazes and boulders game. If you're feeling patient you could hold out for *Elite II*, but it certainly won't be out this year. (Serious types with PC emulators can get games support by the back door – even *Flight Simulator* will run OK – but they will find things move rather slowly.)

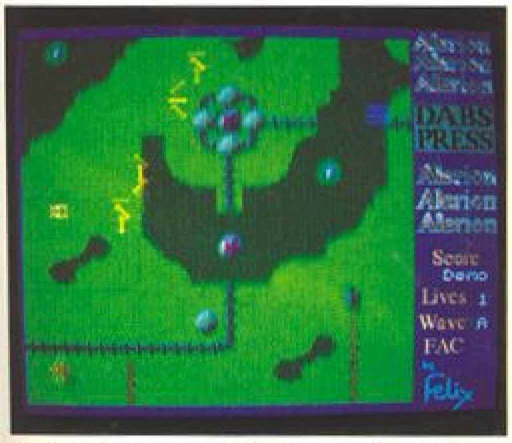
This complexity can be subtle: though the Amiga for example is difficult to program full stop, the ST and Archie are both quite 'clean' designs. The problem is that using the power of these machines properly is so much harder.

Take graphics, for example. On the Spectrum, writing a full spec art package is just a matter of shoehorning some fairly straightforward routines into a small memory. There's no question of writing ray-tracing routines, providing anti-aliasing facilities or (until very recently at any rate) allowing for digital signal processing on grabbed video frames. For a state of the art Archie package you'd have to do all that and more before you actually impressed anyone.

The same goes for games. Once even wire-frame 3D was a mystery to the average programmer, while polygon-filling and other solid 3D routines were strictly for mainframes. Now we're fast approaching the point where these skills are on a par with sprite-handling techniques – an essential part of a games programmer's repertoire, in other words. Where will it all end?

THE NEW WAVE

Don't imagine that this is all idle speculation either. Transputer home micros will be here soon, probably within five years, and fast chips are already upon us. The ARM isn't the only RISC chip out there: most of the others are meant for very high-tech applications but, as Flare showed so clearly with their DSP chip, this kind of technology is well within the reach of individual manufacturers.

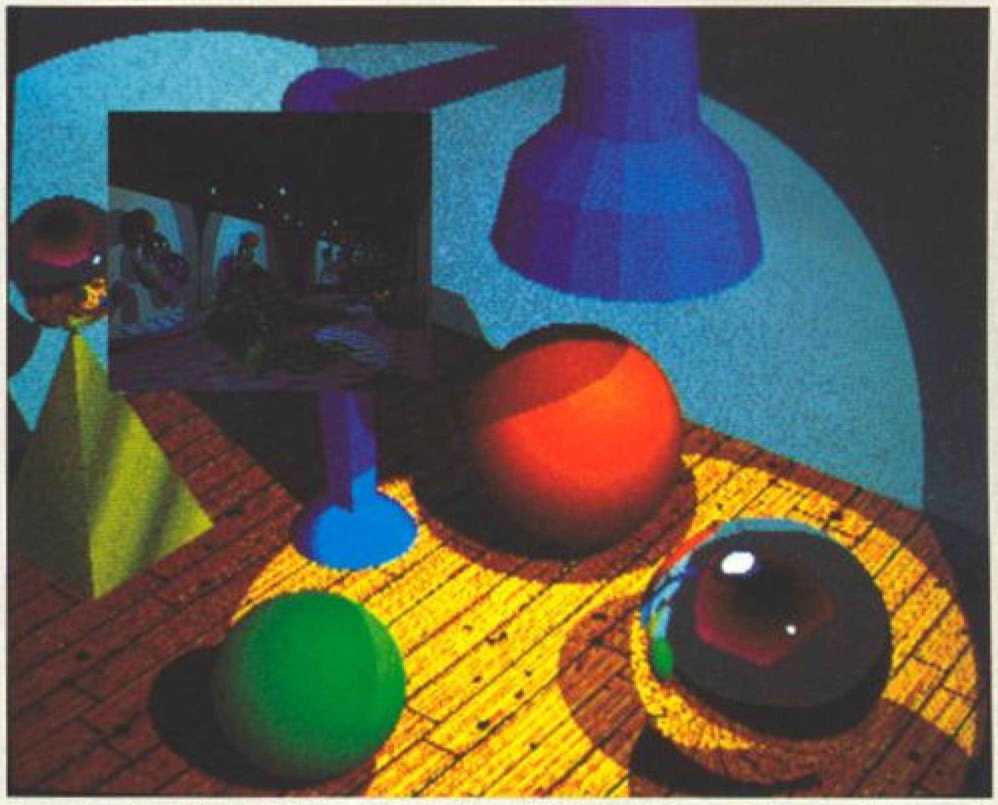


The landscap blurs as you blast your way through *Alerion* (DABS Press). Nothing unusual for the ST or Amiga, but even scrolling shoot-em-ups are rare on the Archie!

RISC isn't the only way to step up micro power either. The next generation of Amigas, the A2500 and A3000, will use faster members of the 68000 family, 32-bits wide rather than 16 and running at higher clock speeds. These may have the benefit of compatibility with old 68000 software, but they'll only be really worth buying when programmers gear up to use that extra power productively.

Busting out of the micro ghetto is a tough job for a new machine, and it's getting tougher with every technological leap forward. In the long run the only answer is for enthusiastic, even commercially foolish companies and individuals to produce quality software, just for the sheer love of it, and for the rest of us to get our wallets out. Assuming, of course, prices are low enough that pioneering souls can actually find the money. ●

SCREEN & SOUND



These *Clares* demos show just what a great ray-tracing machine the Archie is - or will be when they release the software, at any rate!

Visually, the Archimedes could be the most exciting micro under £4000. It takes an Apple Mac II to better the 256-colour 640 x 256-resolution display which even the cheapest Archie can display on a standard RGB monitor. With fancy multi-sync monitors the machine can do even better: this does tend to 'lock out' the processor, slowing it down to half or even a quarter of its normal speed, but that still makes it as fast as an ST!

The Archie's got a lot about it to attract graphics and video developers besides high resolution. It's powerful enough for some speedy ray-tracing for one thing, not to mention the odd bit of fractal-processing. What's more, its colour range makes 'anti-aliasing' a practical proposition. This technique 'smooths off' jagged edges of objects by clever pixel colouring, and can vastly improve the quality of a display. Classy looking anti-aliased fonts are available as standard on the Archie.

There are a number of art packages for the Archie, notably *Artisan* from Clares Micro Supplies and *Leonardo* from Beard Technology, but even these worthies fall some way short of their ST or Amiga counterparts. They lack sophisticated object distortion, can't animate by colour switching, can't ray-trace and – most damagingly of all – can't use the full 256 colour mode.

The good news here is that Clares are now working on *Artisan Professional*, a package that should make good most of these shortcomings. Also still in the wings is the impressive looking art package AMS were showing off at the Personal Computer World Show last year. It's finished now, is due for release very soon under the name of *Finesse Paint*, and will be on display at this year's (now renamed) Personal Computer Show.

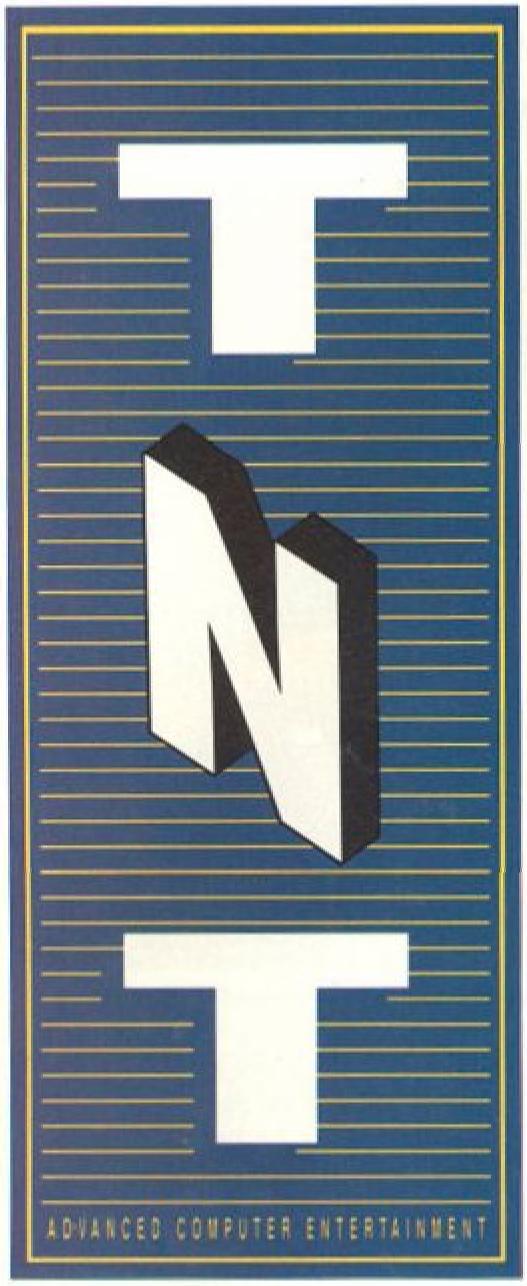
On the desktop video side of things, again the Archie has a great deal of potential. This market niche is fast expanding in the States, where the ability to title or manipulate video images is in big demand. There the machine of the moment is the Amiga, but with its genlock upgrade the Archie could do even better, gaining a nice toe-hold for itself here in the UK – with the right software. Archie-generated sequences have already been used in a couple of TV quiz shows, for example.

More *Clares* ray-traced demos.They do it with mirrors of course!

On the face of it the Archie's got a lot to offer music and sound fans too. Eight built-in stereo channels are complemented by a couple of MIDI add-ons, and already there are a few impressive hardware/software packages available to help you exploit these features.

Top of the audio buff's shopping list must be the excellent *Armadillo* sound sampler card. Games such as Conqueror, Missile Control and the newly released Alerion all feature liberal sprinklings of Armadillo samples, while Acorn have recently used the card to sample several minutes of Jean Michel Jarre for a music demo disk. The Armadillo weighs in at £120 for the basic package, with an optional Fourier waveform analysis program setting real devotees back another £45.

Electro Music Research (EMR) offer a *Sound Synthesis* program which adds eleven extra sampled waveforms to the Archie's basic wave, string and percussion sounds. You can manipulate the waveform data to produce new sounds of your own, but if you're really serious about this you'd do better to stick with the Armadillo sampler.



OIDS

There now follows a public service announcement for all players having any difficulty whatsoever with *Oids* on the ST:

The following listing (which must be typed in using lower case only) will give you infinite lives.

```
10 rem omit line 30 if you are using the new ST basic
20 dim a%(770):cheat=varptr(a%(1))
30 def seg=0
40 gload "a:start.prg",cheat
50 poke cheat+&h260,&h357c: poke
cheat+&h262,&h302c
```

NEIL LUCKMAN, Birmingham

This month's tips include some juicy hints on big games such as *Pandora*, *Leatherneck* and *Gauntlet II*, all to help you push your high scores ever higher. We've seen a glut of tips for 16-bit machines, but not too many on those Spectrums, CPCs and 64s. Come on 8-bitters, we know you're still out there (we've typed in all those reader surveys you sent in)! Never forget to keep sending 'em in – you could win a smash piece of software for your micro!

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR

Here is the definitive playing guide.

THE FIRST SEASON:

The whole game hinges on the mid-fielders, so spend the majority of your money on mid-fielders as they create goal opportunities. It is possible to score lots of goals even if your strikers have poor skill levels. If you get the opportunity to go up a division, don't! If you go up a level too early you will be put back down pretty quickly. By season 3 your players' skill levels have increased sufficiently to try for promotion.

DIVISION THREE:

Again, do not try for promotion until your players have skill levels of about six or seven. It is difficult to progress far in this game without money, so here's the killer – If you are winning consistently and are confident in your team and coach, then bet £100,000 at 72-1 on the league cup. Now save the game every seven games or after every league cup game. If you lose, reload and try again. Your opponents will randomize their skill and eventually with perseverence you'll win. Do this until you win the cup. The following season you'll be credited with over £6,000,000.

Do the same the next season, but spend your money quickly before the large bills for crowd violence start arriving.

COACH AND PHYSIO:

This is very important. In division four it is best to have no coach but always have a physio. If your team is at the bottom then employ an edited coach (i.e. one you have typed in yourself). Also, always have the name of the coach and physio the same. If they do not do well, sack them!

TRANSFERS:

The worst thing in the game is when you get an excellent player and then he gets a testimonial, so you lose him. This is because he is too old – when in the transfer market you get a players name, number and skill; the number is his age, and you should not buy player over 28 years old. Always bid the maximum amount for a player to ensure that you get him.

SUPER SAM

A quick and easy way of gaining extra lives on the Amstrad for this budget game from Budgie Software.

By pressing 'CTRL', 'SHIFT' and 'COPY' together an extra life is obtained. This can be done over and over again to make the game extremely easy.

JOE EMMERSON, Morecambe

STANDS:

Only build a stand when you can afford it. Your current stand can only hold 18,000 spectators so your gate receipts are limited, even for big games.

DIVISION TWO:

Invest in a goalie with skill level of nine, and some good defenders. Remember to have a further bet.

DIVISION ONE:

This division depends entirely on your coach. So it is advisable to change your coaches around to find the best one. If you get in the top four you will get into the UEFA Cup. If you become champions you will go into the European Cup.

There you have it, the Football Directors Bible.

RICHARD REEVES, Sutton Coldfield

BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN

Here's the complete set of codes for both the ST and Amiga versions.

LEVEL	PASSWORD	COMMENT
001	ELEKTRA	PRACTICE
002	SYZYGY	A DODDLE
003	DRAMBUIE	VERY EASY
004	PLUG	EASY
005	SOPRANO	QUITE EASY
006	MAYONNAISE	AVERAGE
007	FAUCET	SOME EFFORT
008	POTATO	MUCH EFFORT
009	WOOMERA	GREAT EFFORT
010	NARCISSUS	TOTAL EFFORT
011	DEBUTANTE	HARD!
012	FIRKIN	REAL HARD
013	ACOUSTIC	VERY HARD
014	TRIPTYCH	LUDICROUS
015	JABBERWOCKY	ABSURD
016	WHIMSICAL	POSSIBLE?
017	CORNUCOPIA	DO THIS ONE!
018	PUNJABI	OK, NOW THIS
019	TIDDLY POM	STILL HERE?!
020	KEWPIE DOLL	BRILLIANT!
021	SEPULCHRE	IMPOSSIBLE..
022	EUPHEMISM	..OR WAS IT?
023	GRAMMARIAN	THE END.
024	CROSSWORD	THE END II
025	QUARANTINE	THAT'S IT.

STEVE WILLIAMS, Co Durham

PANDORA

Here is a very helpful list of tips for this great arcade adventure from Firebird.

- The Diabetic needs the Needle and Insulin.
- The Hooligan has the Prophylactic and the Iridium Mace.
- The Engineer has the ID Engineer and the Sonic Screwdriver.
- The Defence CTRL has the ElectroTruncheon.
- The Second Officer has the Insulin and needs the Sonic Blaster.
- The RSRC Officer has the ID RSRC.
- The Scientist has the ID Scientist.
- The Chemist has the Needle and needs the Book.
- The Driffid needs Sunlight.
- The Doctor has the Squash Ball.
- The Medic has the ID Medic.
- The Gardener has the Insecticide.
- The Deathfly has the Deathsting.
- The Awol Officer has the ID AWOL (a quick way of the ship).
- The Technician has the Bottle of Gin.
- The Robomechanic has the Code Red and needs the Boost and the Flexible Tool.
- The Lord of Ice has the Thermolance.
- The Squash Player has the Electro Boost and needs the Squash Ball.
- The Drunkard has the Glass and needs a drink.
- The Wackobrain has the Sandworm, Electrotruncheon, Wookey Wig and Broken Orak.
- The Bank Manager needs Money.
- The Lt Commander has the ID Lt Commander.
- The Commander has the Code Blue, the Code Green and the ID Commander.
- The Thief has the Sonic Blaster.
- The Priest has the PhotoSabre.
- The Captain has the Floppy Disc.

- To get into the Engineering Level you need the ID Engineer.
- To get into the Commander's Room you need the LT Commander's ID.
- To get into the Captain's Room you need the Commander's ID.
- A Bible is found in the Priest's Room.
- A book of Shakespeare is found in the Commander's Room.
- A Globe is found in the Bank Manager's Room.
- An Ostron Egg is found in the LT Commander's Room.
- ID AWOL takes you off the ship at the bottom of the garden.
- Shoot the thief with the Lazer Rifle from the Second Officer's Room.

That is all we are going to tell you for now as we don't want to spoil your fun!!

S.M. STOCKS, Chesterfield.

GAUNTLET II

This tip offers 50,000 health points to help you on your way with the excellent ST version of the arcade smash.

When your character opens a locked treasure chest hold down the 'HELP' key, then open a second treasure chest with the 'INSERT' key held down. A golden cross appears instead of the second chest, and this cross boosts your health points to 50,000 and gives you reflective and super shots for the duration of the level.

THE JESTER, Trowbridge

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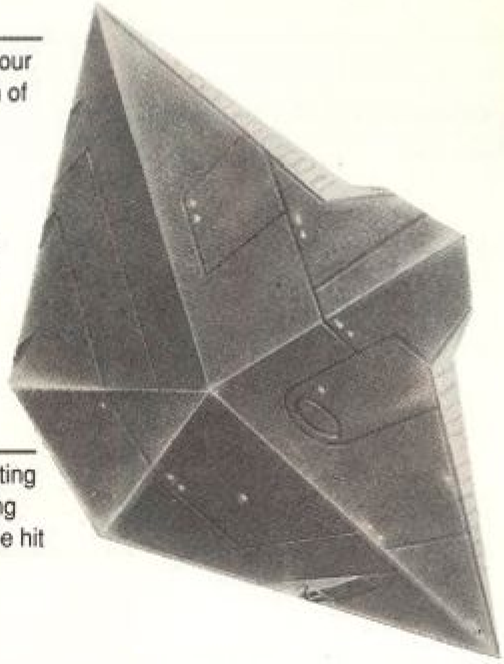
VIRUS

These timely tips should help anyone having difficulty with this superb game.



IN ATTACK

When attacking aliens, always try to be above your target as it's much easier to control the direction of your hovercraft when it's pitched down.

SEEDERS

These are the easiest of the lot and you should have no trouble taking them out. Try flying directly over them and firing downwards.

BOMBERS

Try to fly alongside the bombers rather than waiting for them to pass you. Be careful though of getting too close behind him because otherwise you'll be hit by the parachute bombs.

PESTS

Stay near the ground so you can see their shadows. By watching the shadow, you should be able to work out its path. Then try to point at where it's going, thrust up gently when it passes over you, and start firing.

DRONES, MUTANTS AND FIGHTERS

Again, stay near the ground so you can see their shadows, and keep the craft low and moving slowly in one direction. At first they will circle you, and then they will pitch downwards and start to thrust. This indicates that they are about to dive on you and you should now ensure that the craft is behind you, otherwise you are likely to collide. Wait for the alien to come onto the screen then turn around and start firing and thrusting upwards. You can pursue the alien upwards until you destroy it, but it's probably best to fall back to the ground and start again should you lose sight of the alien. Also be careful not to get too high, because once your engines have cut-out you will become a sitting duck for the aliens.

ATTRACTORS

If you are going to destroy these with missiles, try to launch the missile when the attractor is over a flat piece of land or sea because otherwise the missile is likely to hit the ground. Alternatively, you can try to hit it the five times needed to destroy it by staying low as you approach the attractor, because if you are too high above it, it will pull you into the ground. When it starts to pull you, start firing and thrusting. By thrusting, you should be able to avoid crashing into it, and with some luck, some of your bullets should hit it as you are pulled back and forth over it. However, once you only have one third of your fuel left, it is probably best to try to dis-engage. The easiest way to do this is to first thrust in one direction away from the attractor, then turn round and thrust towards and over the attractor. The speed you gain from thrusting and the pull of the attractor should be enough to break away from it.

MYSTERY SPACECRAFT

This first appears on wave six and is represented by a black dot on your scanner. The ship is grey and flies fairly high but only slowly through the air. It scores 2000 points for a kill and defends itself by firing small pest-like objects at you. The ship needs multiple hits to destroy it and is able to jam your missiles on wave seven and beyond. The easiest way to destroy it is to hover near to it by watching its shadow and then thrust straight up. Try to get as many hits on it as you can when you see it, but break off the attack after it's launched more than three of it's mini-pests. Destroy these away from the spaceship before attacking it again.

A. THAYA-PARAN, Billericay.

SOFTWARE GIVEAWAY!!

S.M. Stocks picks up this month's goody bag of software prizes - Starglider 2, Eliminator, Helter Skelter, Virus, Whirligig and Super Hang-On. Wow! Steve Williams also picks up a copy of Starglider 2 and The Jester wins a copy of Super Háng-On. Richard Reeves wins himself a copy of Dark Side for his C64 and Neil Luckman walks away with a copy of Whirligig and Lindsay McEwan grabs a copy of Barbarian II. Get those maps, tips and pokes rolling into the address below, and YOU could earn yourself some fantastic prizes! Don't just sit there - do it!

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS
ACE
4 QUEEN STREET
BATH
BA1 1EJ

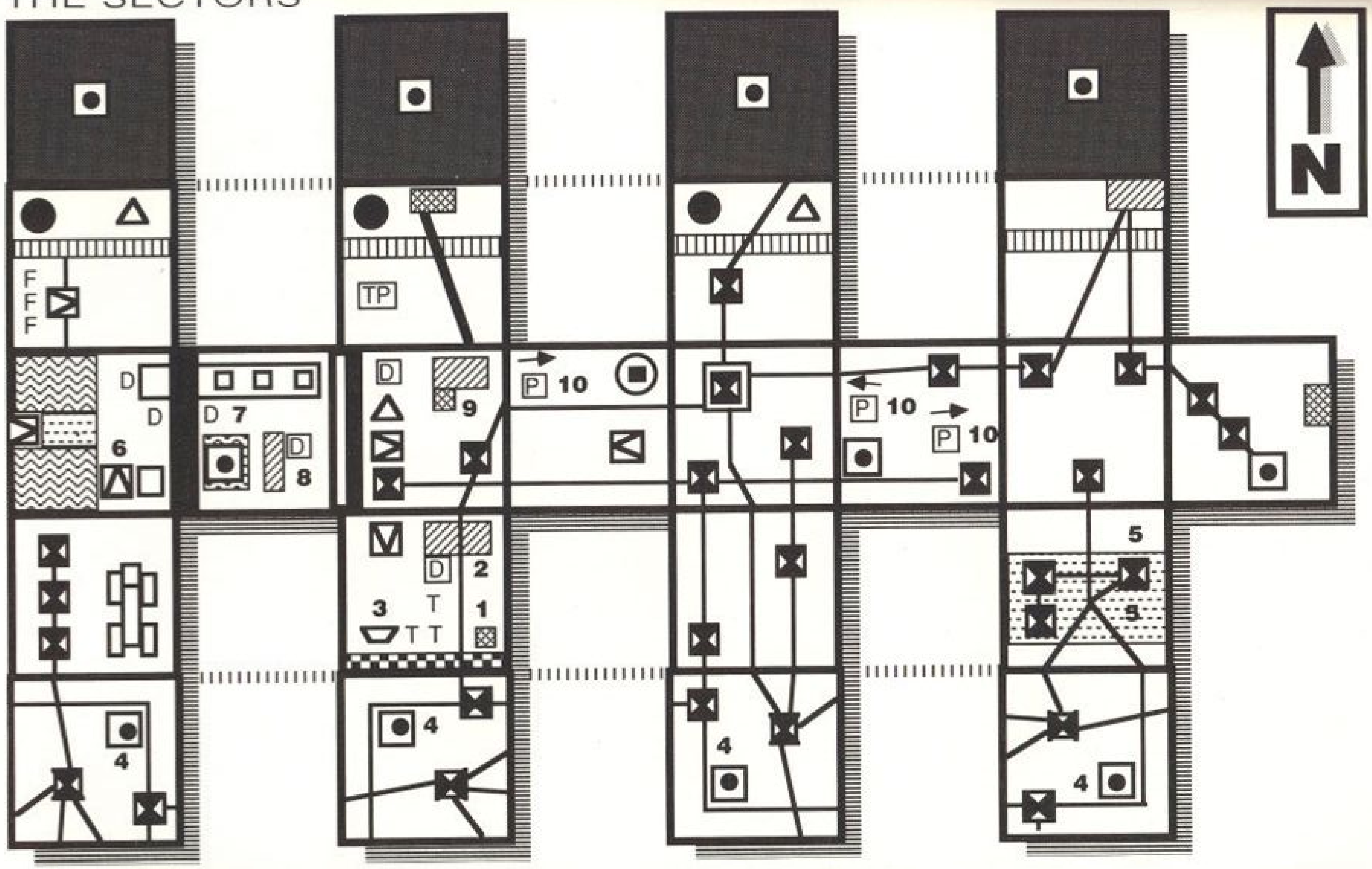
LEATHERNECK

How about invincibility for all players on the ST and Amiga.

Start the game and type 'CUTHBERTNECK', then press F3. This will give all players protection from enemy fire, but not from your teammates' bullets. To return to normal press F3 once again.

JOHN LEE, Walthamstow

THE SECTORS


N
F
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6
8
9
P 10
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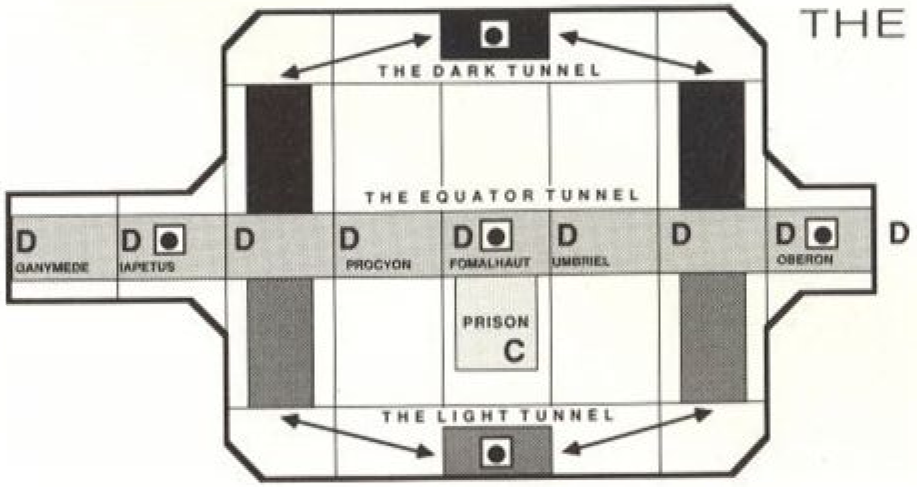
THE TUNNELS


THE DARK TUNNEL
THE EQUATOR TUNNEL
THE LIGHT TUNNEL
D
GANYMEDE
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THE NAMES

OBERON
|
NEREICL - TITANIA - ANTARES
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POLLOX - FOMALHAU - MONOCEROS
|
PROCYON
|
PSYCHE - SIRIUS - REGULUS
|
IAPETUS
|
THETHYS - GANYMEDE - TRITON

● DARK SIDE

Lindsay McEwan of Glasgow has kindly sent us in this map for *Dark Side* so that we may help all you out there who are having any problems finding your way around.

THE KEY

⊠	ECD
▽	TRANSPORTER
TP	TELEPOD
P	PRISON TOWER
F	FUEL STORE
S	SHIELD STORE
T	TREE
D	DOOR
D	DOOR BEHIND WALL
S	START
C	CRYSTAL
■	WALL
▨	BUILDING
▩	BLOCK
▚	VISIBLE BARRIER
▥	INVISIBLE BARRIER
▲	HOLE IN WALL
●	SPARES FOR THE TELEPOD
◙	ENTRANCE/EXIT TO TUNNELS
≋	DROP IN FLOOR LEVEL
⁙	RAISED PLATFORM

ACE PINK PAGES

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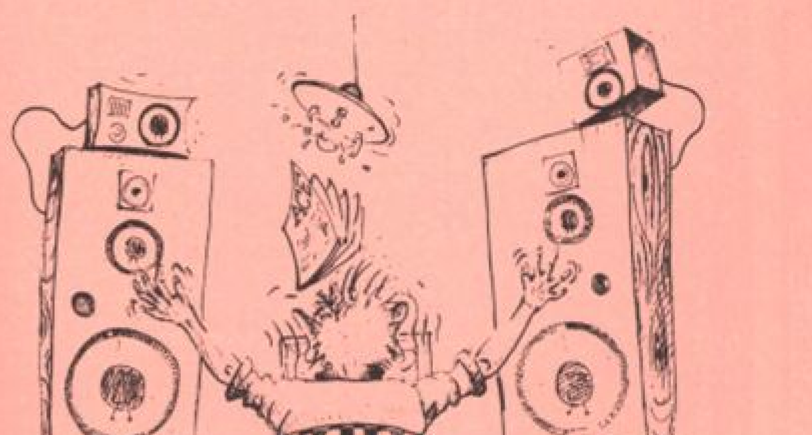

AMIGA SOUND EFFECTS...!

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GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE

All of the following games are **ACE RATED**, that means they're all red hot masterpieces of computer entertainment. Some of the games were available long before the first issue of ACE came off the presses however, so we never had the chance to review them in the magazine. These games are marked with the **ACE CLASSIC** flash, and rest assured, they're all superb pieces of software and are well deserving of the title.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fun factor and plenty of addictiveness feature here.

ACE CLASSIC ★

ARKANOID

Imagine ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari XL/XE £8.95cs ● Atari ST £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Conversion from *Arkanoid* the coin-op, in its turn the **best version** of the classic *Breakout*. Simple in concept: the player controls a bat at the base of the screen, whizzing it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the bat to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictiveness. As a faithful coin-op conversion, *Arkanoid* **comes out top**, but for a different slant on the same theme and some **nifty music**, try ASL's *Impact*, which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

ACE CLASSIC ★

BOUNDER

Gremlin Graphics ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk ●

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and **very addictive** too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay aloft longer or gain a **mystery bonus**. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many nasties, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, witty graphics, great music – and it's **so playable**.

ACE RATED 958 C64

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. **Enormously good fun**, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

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Elite ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £14.95dk

A non-stop action driving game that will keep even the most ardent *Out Run fans busy for a* **long while***. Collect the time bonuses in the attempt to* complete the five gruelling courses. **Instantly playable** and highly addictive, *Buggy Boy* should be on any racing fan's shopping list

---

ACE RATED 931 ARCHIE

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a **tricky game** to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become **mesmerised** by the thing. If you ain't got a 1Mb Archie though – forget it!

ACE RATED 904 ST

ELIMINATOR

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.99cs £12.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Graphically wonderful **roadway blast-em-up** by John Phillips, which will twist your joystick inside-out. It'll even have you driving **on the ceiling**. See the main review on page 82 for more details.

ACE CLASSIC ★

EXOLON

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Graphically superb *horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you run,* duck and jump your way along a planet's surface blasting away at alien defences. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an exoskeleton for extra protection and fire power.

ACE RATED 969 ST

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £19.99dk

A **magnificent** *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids – **great stuff**!

ACE CLASSIC ★

PITSTOP 2

Epyx/US Gold ● Available only on Epyx Epics compilation ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk (in compilation with *Winter Games* and *Summer Games 2*)

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, tyre blow-outs and of course the all-important pitstops guarantee to give you **hand cramp** and your brain a real racing treat.

ACE RATED 893 ST

SPIDERTRONIC

Ere International ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured panels in the correct order. The built-in construction set means you'll be knocking out your own levels till the **cows come home.**

ACE CLASSIC ★

SUMMER GAMES

Epyx/US Gold ● C64 £9.95 cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk

Epyx sporting simulations are of high quality but **none** have quite cap*tured the playability and style of the original Summer Games and its* immediate successor, *Summer Games 2*. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and **smooth animation** throughout. Control of your athlete can be complex so practice is recommended.

ACE RATED 907 SPECTRUM

SUPER SPRINT

Electric dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk Amstrad £9.99cs Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is **fast and furious** and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more **tortuous circuits** that appear later in the game.

ACE CLASSIC ★

THRUST

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of **real-life physics** make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. **Tough enough** as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. **Very mean, very addictive.**

ACE RATED 931 SPECTRUM

THUNDERCATS

Elite ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

The game based on the hit TV series/comic/plastic toy. It's a side-on view scroller that just oozes gameplay. Each of the game's 14 levels is a **straight line dash** from start to finish with a multitude of obstacles to avoid along the way. Graphically impressive and **compulsively playable** too.

ACE CLASSIC ★

URIDIUM

Hewson ● Spectrum £8.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £14.95dk

The **piece de resistance** of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. **Great metallic-looking dreadnoughts** and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game **not to be missed**, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent *Paradroid.*

ACE RATED 981 ST

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Firebird (16 and 8-bit versions) Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Some 8-bit versions under development

STILL ACE'S **highest rated game** to date. A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and **timelessly addictive** gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions (check out the review on p.54). All that remains to be seen now is whether we'll be ACE rating the 8-bit versions.

ADVENTURES

Adventures have come a long way since The Hobbit. State-of-the-art graphics and powerful parsers enable you to communicate with other characters, and fully explore the world of your choosing. Add role-playing elements and you can see why this section of the software bizz is the fastest growing area of computer entertainment.

ACE RATED 920 ST

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● PC £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to **muscle in** on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.

ACE RATED 920 C64

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, the **ranged combat routines** which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally the game's larger and represents **excellent value for money.**

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ACE CLASSIC ★

Rainbird ● C64 £19.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

One of Britain's newer adventure software houses – Magnetic Scrolls – managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with **superb graphics** and some very tricky puzzles. **Powerful parser** helps to create a convincing game world with humor and imagination.

JEWELS OF DARKNESS

ACE CLASSIC ★

Rainbird ● C64 £14.95cs ● Spectrum 128 £14.95cs ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● PC £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Level 9, Britain's oldest adventure programming family, have put together three of their classic releases, *Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure* and *Adventure Quest* in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the **original spirit** of adventuring as you're **likely to find.**

TIME AND MAGIK

ACE RATED 919 AMSTRAD

Mandarin ● Spectrum £14.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● PC £19.99dk

This compilation of the Level 9 games, *Lords Of Time, Red Moon* and *The Price Of Magik* have all been re-vamped with better parsing, **bigger vocabularies** and pictures added. **Superb value** if you don't already own all the games.

CORRUPTION

ACE RATED 920 ST

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● C64 £17.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk

This tale of **insider dealings**, infidelity and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventurers who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. **Superb graphics**, great atmosphere and a **nail-biting plot** makes this a terrific game that grips from the start.

WASTELAND

ACE RATED 921 C64

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

Charge around irradiated USA whopping mutant bunnies and biker scum in this role-playing epic. The atmosphere may not be as good as the *Bard's Tale* series of games, but the extra dimension of strategy, which leave the cut, slash and spell scenario of the BT series way behind.

ULTIMA V

ACE CLASSIC ★

Origin Systems/Microprose ● C64 £24.95dk ● PC £29.95 ● ST/Amiga to be announced

Astonishing level of detail in thie role-playing inlfuenced epic. Travel round Britannia trashing the opposition and learning the magical, tactical, and geaographical secrets that will enable you to defeat the forces of evil far underground. Superb romp, great lasting interest, and tough challenges galore.

LURKING HORROR

ACE CLASSIC ★

Infocom/Mediagenic ● C64 £19.99dk ● ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college laboratory. Superb text-only game with location descriptions that defy you to play it after dark...

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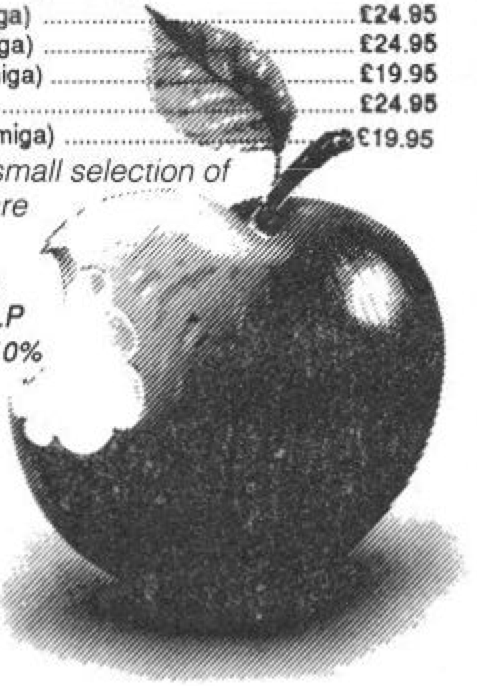

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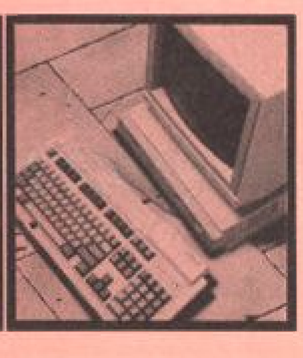
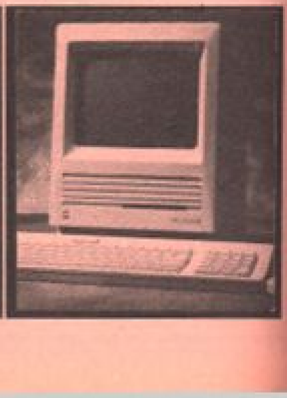
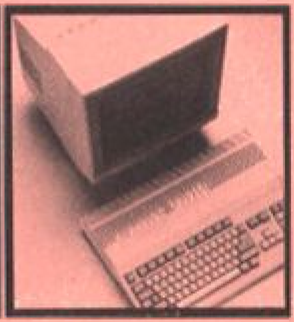
HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	ACORN ARCHIMEDES	APPLE MACINTOSH
THE RANGE	The 305 and 310 are home machines, while the 410 and 440 are only really of interest to serious users.	The Mac SE comes in a distinctive upright monitor/system box with built-in drives, while the Mac II's system/drive box and dedicated monitor are separate. Both have separate keyboard and mouse.
MEMORY & CHIPS	The 305 has 512K of memory while the 310 has 1Mb, but both use Acorn's own super-fast 32-bit ARM chip as their central processor.	Though both machines have 1Mb of memory, the SE only has a Motorola 68000 to push it around while the II uses the much faster (but closely related) 68020.
PRICES	Recommended retail prices start at £801.60 for the 305 on its own. There's no sign of a second-hand market as yet.	Recommended retail prices start at £2,294 for the SE and £4,329 for the Mac II. Macs tend to keep their value well, so second-hand ones aren't terribly cheap. Cut-price brand new ones are rare too, so the cheapest thing can be to personally import one from the States (i.e. fly to New York, buy a Mac and bring it back with you).
GRAPHICS	Screen resolution is variable: typical modes would be 320x256 in 256 colours 640x256 in 16 colours or – with an expensive multi-sync monitor – an impressive 640x512, again in 16 colours. There's one hardware sprite – the cursor – but with that speedy ARM chip for power, the Archie's blindingly fast in software.	The mono-only SE has a screen resolution of 512x342, while the Mac II runs to a 1027x760 screen in 16 colours, chosen from a palette of more than 16 million!
MONITORS	B/w – composite video; colour – RGB +-sync; no TV modulator.	As well as the built-in (SE) or dedicated (Mac II) Apple units, there are plenty of third-party monitors offering million-pixel screens and similar. Like most things Mac-ish, these get very pricey.
SOUND	The Archie's built in sound features 16 channels (in 8 stereo pairs) and a range of six octaves, all fed through a good-quality internal speaker.	The Mac's four-channel sound chip can produce some very acceptable noises – stereo on the Mac II – but you'll need a third-party MIDI port add-on if you're serious about music.
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The built-in drive is quiet and fast, and packs a healthy 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The Archie comes with a nice 3-button mouse – but has no joystick port!	The fast, reliable built-in drives pack 800K onto a 3.5in disk. The keyboard's very high-quality stuff, as is the one-button mouse.
SOFTWARE	Games for the Archie are rare things indeed. Superior and Grand Slam are both committed to supporting the machine, but for now the only major titles are *Zarch* and (for 310 owners) *Conqueror*, both ACE-rated games. There's still no sign of a game that really pushes the Archie to anything like its limits. The handful of graphics packages available should keep art-loving Archie owners happy for now. Other applications areas are ticking over nicely if not exactly booming.	Games software is not terribly plentiful on the Mac, though adventurers are well catered for. There's a huge amount of graphics and desk-top publishing software – most of it firmly mono – and a fine range of titles for the business user. There's also plenty of great software for the MIDI musician, but it doesn't come cheap.
PROSPECTS	The Archie's educational leanings make for a poor games outlook – there's no sign of support from any of the big-league houses – and the lack of a joystick port doesn't help. The graphics software base would mushroom if Acorn cut their prices, but until then things don't look too hot here either.	The future for the Mac is excellent, but mostly on the serious side of things.
OVERALL	The Archimedes is years ahead of its time, and vastly more powerful than the competition. A stiff bit of price-cutting would make it an unbeatable leisure machine, but Acorn just don't seem to be interested. At the current price it's a worthwhile buy for computer scientists and people with money to burn, but that's about it.	The Mac's a very upmarket machine, and is priced accordingly. Almost essential for DTP users, it's a luxury item or Yuppie toy for the rest of us.
RATINGS	Graphics 5 Sound 4 SOFTWARE: Range 1 Quality 2 Prospects 2 	Graphics (SE) 3 Sound 4 SOFTWARE: Range 4 Quality 5 Prospects 4 

ATARI ST	COMMODORE AMIGA	IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
The 520STFM and 1040STF both come as combined keyboard/system/drive consoles.	The A500 is a single unit with built-in disk drive, while the A2000 has a separate keyboard and system box.	IBM's PC is the original, but the best buys these days are 'clones' like Amstrad's PC1512 and 1640. Specifications apply to most modern PCs, but check the details for yourself before buying.
The 520STFM has 512K of memory, while the 1040STF has 1Mb. Both use the Motorola 68000 processor.	The A500 has 512K of memory and the A2000 a hefty 1Mb, both of them using a Motorola 68000 for processing power.	PC compatibles normally have 512K or 640K of memory, with an Intel 8086 or related processor. (The 8088 is slower, while the 80286 and 80386 are faster but more expensive.)
Recommended retail prices are 520STFM P £399.99, 1040STF P £599.99, but there are very strong rumours of an impending price cut, restoring the 520ST's old £299.99 price tag.There's a strong second-hand market in 520ST's, and reductions on brand new ones aren't hard to find either. The new price cuts could well throw this into turmoil, mind you	Recommended retail prices are: A500 £399, A2000 £1236. Shop around for lower prices or package deals. There's a fair old second-hand trade in unwanted A500's, though the recent drop in RRP means that prices here may not be too good. Also still available is the creaky old A1000, the first Amiga model and, with its lengthy boot-up sequence and puny (256K) memory, deservedly discontinued.	Prices start at around £400 for a mono PC, but a 640K machine with an EGA display and top-flight monitor will cost more like £1000. There's a thriving second-hand market, and even buying brand new you're well advised to shop around.
TV or colour monitor users can get at two screen modes on the ST, medium res (640x200 in 4 colours) and low res (320x200 in 16 colours), both working from a 512-colour palette. Users with mono monitors can only access one mode, high res, which gives them a 640x400 screen in black and white.	Hardware sprites and scrolling make conventional games easy to write, while the built-in blitter greatly speeds up large-scale graphics operations. Typical screen modes are 320x200 in 16 colours for games, 320x256 in 32 or 4096 colours for art, or 640x256 in 16 colours for serious use. In all cases, colours are taken from a palette of 4096.	The three main graphics standards are CGA, EGA and Hercules. None of these offer sprites or scrolling in hardware. The main CGA (Colour Graphics Adaptor) modes are 320x200 in 4 colours and 640x200 in mono. CGA has no palette as such: the 4-colour mode comes in two colour-scheme choices, but that's all. An EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adaptor) PC can produce these two CGA modes plus a few of its own, offering displays of up to 640x350 in 16 colours from a palette of 64. Hercules graphics are mono only, but with a maximum resolution of 720x348 they can be very useful for applications like DTP (Desk-Top Publishing).
RGB, Mono, or built-in TV modulator (520ST only – 1040ST needs separate modulator).	SCART output for e.g. Commodore's A1081 monitor (£349.99, but look out for bundling deals). TV modulators are available, but aren't included in the price.	Normally standard RGB, with no TV output.
The internal sound chip's poor, with only three channels and no stereo, but the built-in MIDI port's made the ST a must for penny-wise musicians.	Built-in sound is excellent, with 8 channels in 4 stereo pairs offering you a nine octave range or some reasonable human-ish speech. You'll need a third party add-on to get MIDI compatibility, mind you.	A weak sound standard is very much the PC's Achilles' heel as a games machine, and speaker quality is usually low accordingly. MIDI interfaces are available, but the ST and Mac still beat the PC as machines for the musically minded.
The internal drive stores 360K (most 520s sold at the moment) or 720K (brand new 520s and all 1040s) on a 3.5in disk. A two-button mouse plugs into one of the inconveniently situated controller ports, leaving the other one free for a joystick.	The Amiga's built-in drive is often noisy and always slow, but it does pack 880K onto a 3.5in disk so it's not a total disaster. The two-button mouse takes up one of the machine's two controller ports.	Though 5.25in 360K disks are still the standard, the newer 3.5in 720K drives are becoming more common. There are two different joystick standards, IBM (which is analogue, and the norm for older or American games) and Amstrad (which takes a standard Atari-style stick).
With the best games support of any machine listed here, the ST's probably still leading the upgrade race. Graphics software's some way behind the Amiga but catching up fast, with new titles stretching the ST's limited hardware quite remarkably. The ST's built-in MIDI port has earned it outstanding support on the music front, with some excellent packages from a wide range of companies. Serious software's looking up too.	On the games front the Amiga's now coming out of the ST's shadow, at least to the extent that most ST games also appear in Amiga form. Unfortunately they are still usually straight conversions, taking no account of the Amiga's extra hardware. There's a wide range of art, video and animation packages for the machine, many of them excellent. Music's less well catered for, but the built-in hardware's got great potential.	There's a vast software base for PCs, but relatively few games that are good by modern standards. This situation's rapidly improving though, as is the art side of things (especially on the EGA front). Music software is available (if rather expensive), but it's only on the serious side of things that the PC really wins out.
Great, especially if the price cut materialises as expected. The ST's rapidly catching the 8-bit market leaders on numbers of titles, and easily outstripping them on quality.	Looking very bright now, thanks to Commodore's recent price cut.	Prospects for a PC games boom are good, especially if Amstrad's rumoured ultra-cheap PC leisure clone shows up.
An excellent all-rounder, the ST delivers no-frills power at an affordable price. It's number one for MIDI fans, terrific for games and – with mono monitor – a great machine for serious use as well.	Though its hardware makes it a great games machine, the Amiga still lacks the software to really show it off properly. It's a must-buy for the computer artist, however.	The PC's a fine all-round machine, and the workhorse of modern computing – but if you're just interested in games or music, you'd best look elsewhere.

	ATARI ST	COMMODORE AMIGA	IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES
Graphics	4	5	4
Sound	3	5	1
SOFTWARE:			
Range	4	3	5
Quality	4	4	5
Prospects	5	5	4



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Horace Claghandle was worried. For some reason that last Centauran Battledrone wouldn't die. He'd always been able to clear the screen in the past with contemptuous ease - but not any more. That was bad enough, but something even more strange was happening. Even though he hadn't shot it that Centauran Battledrone should have scrolled past to make way for the Radioactive Killer Entrails, but it didn't...

N'Gar Thrombobo was enjoying himself. He carefully explored the confines of the screen, impervious to Horace Claghandle's frantic Megalasering. Only when he was thoroughly satisfied did he retire from the screen - back the way he had come, and straight into the arms, so to speak, of the Radioactive Killer Entrails.

Horace Claghandle watched, amazed, as the Centauran Battledrone went off the screen the wrong way. He was reassured when the Radioactive Killer Entrails appeared as usual, but his relief turned to dismay when half of them turned out to be tied in knots. Surely the disk must have become corrupted, a theory borne out when he came to type in his name on the high-score table below that of...N'Gar Thrombobo.

Now, of course, N'Gar Thrombobo was unstoppable. He constructed himself some very comfortable electronic living quarters in the Amoeba's ROM, and began to explore the other software in the Claghandle household. All was quiet for a few days, until Father Archibald Claghandle returned from a meeting with his bank-manager in tears. A business report, prepared using his latest version of Bloatus 3-2-1, had not turned out quite as expected. On the contrary, it had sent Mr Blenkinsop into hysterics. The exact nature of the problem remained disturbingly unclear as the print-out was instantly shredded by the distraught Blenkinsop who not only refused to discuss the matter further, but also closed all the Claghandle accounts forthwith.

Meanwhile Mavis Claghandle rebooted her wordprocessor eleven times in an attempt to stop Montgomery Heathcliffe being laminated by a large alien battledroid every time he set foot outside Wuthering Manor.

Most badly affected of all, though, was poor Horace Claghandle. He didn't eat, didn't sleep, just sat at his Amoeba trying to shoot that Centauran Battledroid. In the end he went quite mad, and had to be taken away.

That should have been enough for N'Gar Thrombobo, but vengeance had ceased to be his prime preoccupation. For he had discovered that Archibald Claghandle had a modem...

THE ACE PUZZLE No 7

Set by Archie Medes

● SEVEN SEARCH

4	3	0	6	7	4
7	9	4	3	6	7
5	1	8	2	1	7
3	4	7	1	9	4
7	4	9	5	6	7
7	8	3	9	7	2

In this grid we have concealed some multiples of the number 7. They can be found in exactly the same way as the words in the more familiar 'word-search' puzzles, except that here we are dealing with numbers rather than words.

You can read the numbers in any direction - up, down, left to right, right to left, or diagonally. For example in the diagonal indicated there are seven multiples of 7:

89117, 8911, 119, 98, 91, 7, and, running in the other direction, 7119.

Can you say how many different multiples of 7 are concealed in this grid? Remember, you may only count any multiple once, even though it may appear in the grid several times. (Zero is not counted as a multiple in this puzzle.)

NAME ....

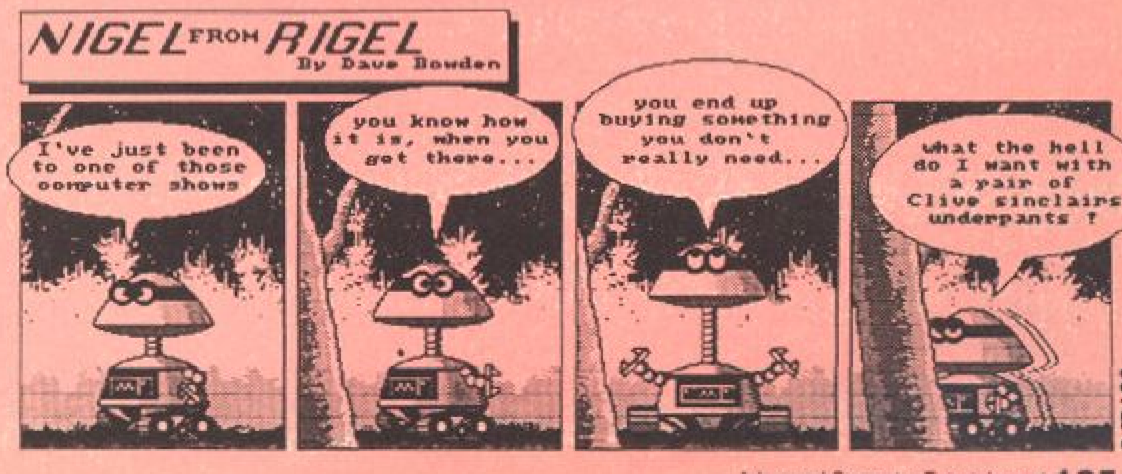
....

ADDRESS ....

....

COMPUTER OWNED ....

● SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO: PRIZE PUZZLE 7, ACE, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BA1 1EJ. CLOSING DATE OCTOBER 10TH ●


NIGEL FROM RIGEL
By Dave Bowden
I've just been to one of those computer shows
you know how it is, when you get there...
you end up buying something you don't really need...
what the hell do I want with a pair of Clive sinclairs underpants !
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ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD No7

Set by Mips

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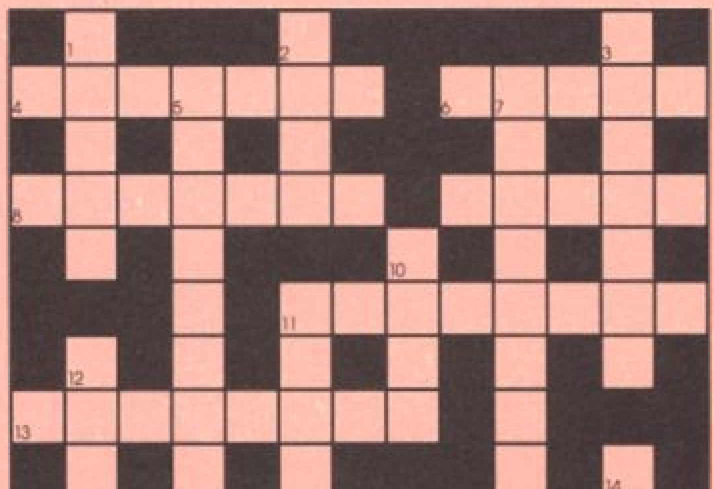
The ACE crossword is cryptic. The answer might be an anagram, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or simply another word hinted at by the clue. Most – but not quite all – of the answers are computer-related.

ACROSS

4. Keyboard comfort? (7)
6. 'Art', a program i've written on an ST, perhaps (5)
8. One making holes in computer game (7)
9. Boy - this game's full of errors! (5)
11. Car fight from Origin Systems (8)
13. Wrong girl, say, for Spectrum's Clive (8)
15. Sending a message about computer entertainment (5)
16. 'Scared,' a novelty found in games halls (7)
18. I, chan, might get into a state (5)
19. Peter's about to learn first videotex system (7)

DOWN

1. Not interested, we hear, in support for printed circuit (5)
2. Game makes Max so unhappy (4)
3. Put the squeeze on, it may get you fired (7)
5. Computer feature favoured by the schizophrenic (5,6)
7. Game for stormy felines (11)
10. Highlight of arts program (4)
11. Sugar's first in New Zealand (4)
12. Fishy software house (7)
14. Number seen surrounding first videodisk (5)
17. Unusual rear design (4)



CROSSWORD ENTRY FORM

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ADDRESS ....

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No 5

The number is: 3816547290 This number is exactly divisible by 10. Cross off the right hand digit in turn to produce a set of numbers exactly divisible by 9,8,7,6,5,4,3, and 2 in turn.

The solution is not difficult but it is rather lengthy, requiring a bit of logic together with a computer program or two to help things along. Throughout this explanation the term 'divisible' is taken to mean divisible EXACTLY without a remainder.

Any number divisible by 10 must end in zero, so we can immediately place the zero at the right-hand end of the line of digits. By a similar argument, the five digit number can now only end in a 5, so this digit can be placed in fifth position. All multiples of 2,4,6, and 8 must end in an even digit so the four remaining even digits must occur in the positions denoted by 'e', and the odds, therefore in the positions marked 'x'.

xexe5exex0

To determine if a number is divisible by four, divide the last two digits by four. If the division is exact, then the whole number is divisible by four (as in the test for leap years). Since the last two digits of the four digit number must be odd/even, the even digit can only be either 2 or 6.

A similar test can be performed to determine if a number is exactly divisible by 8, except that this time the final THREE digits need to be taken. If these are exactly divisible by 8 then the complete number will be.

Thus, these last three digits must be in the series: 000, 008, 016, 024, and so on up to 992, whereupon the series repeats again. From the arrangement of odd and even digits we need to find all of the three digit terminators in the form even/odd/even, but excluding any where the even digit is zero or the odd digit is 5 (as these digits have already been placed). Also, any which have the two even digits identical can also be eliminated. This is done in program listing 1, which produces the following 12 possibilities:
216 296 416 432 472 496 632 672 816 832 872 892

However, we have already noted that the fourth digit must be either a 2 or a 6, we can eliminate from this list those numbers which contain both.

The list now reads: 416 432 472 496 816 832 872 896

Turning our attention now to the six digit number, this must end in the digits 25_ or 65_, the blank being an even number. The 2 and the 6 being, of course, the final digit of the four digit number. Program listing 2 prints out all multiples of 6 which end in agreement with these digits. This results in an endlessly repeating loop of 10 possibilites. Two can be eliminated as counting a zero, and a further two which contain two similar digits. We can now compare the six remaining values with our list of numbers which terminate the eight digit numbers and a series of pairings can be made:

258 can be paired with 816 832 872 896; **254** can be paired with 416 432 472 496; **256** can be paired with 632 672; **654** can be paired with 416 432 472 496; **652** can be paired with 216 296; **658** can be paired with 816 832 876 896

In each of these pairings the last digit of the one value must be the same as the first digit of the other as they form five digit sequences. But, from this list can be removed those values in which any digit is repeated – for example, 258 and 832 (there are two 2's). This will result in just seven five digit sequences – these digits being at positions 4 to 8 in the 10 digit number:
25816 25896 25416 25496 65432 65472 or 65832

We can now fit in the missing even digit for each of these possibilities as three even digits have already been accounted for (plus the zero at the end). In the case of the first of the set of numbers above we would get:
x4x25816

Now, the first three digits must be a multiple of 3 and the two x's are two of the remaining odd digits (i.e. excluding 5 and the odd digit already in 7th place). In the above example the unused odd digits are 3, 7 and 9 and a quick check will reveal that there is no combination which will form a multiple of 3 with the 4 as the middle digit. The remaining possibilities each produce either two or four likely numbers. These are listed below. This gives us in each case the first eight digits of the sequence. Although we have checked that the three digits which end the six digit sequence can end a multiple of 6, we have not as yet checked that the complete six digits are divisible (unlike the case of 4 and 8, multiples of 6 cannot be tested in this way). We already know that every one of these sequences have 'n' digits that are divisible by 'n' when 'n' is either 2, 3, 4, 5 or 8. Now we have to test that

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the first 6 digits are divisible by 6, and the first 7 digits are divisible by 7. These are therefore tested on the table below:

	n=6	n=7
74125896	✓	x
14725896	✓	x
78325416	x	x
38725416	x	x
78925416	x	x
98725416	x	✓
78325496	x	x
38725496	x	x
18325496	x	x
38125496	x	x
18965432	✓	x
98165432	✓	x
78965432	✓	x
98765432	✓	x
18365472	✓	x
38165472	✓	✓
18965472	✓	x
98165472	✓	x
14765832	x	x
74165832	x	x

From this it can be seen that only 38165472 passes both tests, thus producing a single sequence of eight digits in which the first 'n' digits are divisible by 'n'. All that remains is to add the missing two digits. The ninth digit can only be the one remaining odd digit (9). The nine digit sequence so produced, must be divisible by 9, as indeed it is (in fact, the sequence of digits 1 to 9 in ANY order will always produce a multiple of nine). It just remains to add the zero on to the right-hand end to complete our sequence of ten digits with the required property: 3816547290

LISTING 1

```
100 FOR N=0 TO 992 STEP 8
110 N$=STR$(N)
120 IF LEFT$(N$,1)=RIGHT$(N$,1)
THEN 180
130 D$=MID$(N$,1,1)
140 IF D$="1" OR D$="3" OR
D$="5" OR D$="7" OR D$="9"
THEN 180
150 D$=MID$(N$,2,1)
160 IF D$="0" OR D$="2" OR
D$="4" OR D$="6" OR D$="8"
THEN 180
170 PRINT N$; " ";
180 NEXT
```

LISTING 2

```
100 N=258
110 N$=STR$(N):N$=RIGHT$(N$,3)
120 IF MID$(N$,1,1)<>"2" AND
MID$(N$,1,1)<>"6" THEN 150
130 IF MID$(N$,2,1)<>"5" THEN
150
140 PRINT N$;" ";
150 N=N+6: GOTO 110
```

This month's winner is **Philip Beber** of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire who wins himself £25 of software for his Amstrad. ●

SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD NO 5

The first correct entry out of the postbag for last months was **P. M. Thorp** of **Macclesfield,** who wins £25 worth of software for his micro.

This is what the completed crossword should have looked like...

■	1 R	■	2 H	■	■	■	■	■	3 P	■	4 S	■
5 D	E	J	A	V	6 U	■	7 B	O	A	S	T	S
■	N	■	C	■	N	■	E	■	C	■	A	■
■	E	■	8 K	N	I	G	H	T	M	A	R	E
■	G	■	E	■	T	■	I	■	A	■	■	■
9 T	A	N	D	Y	■	10 E	N	S	N	A	11 R	E
■	D	■	■	■	12 M	■	D	■	■	■	O	■
13 N	E	M	14 E	S	I	S	■	15 C	16 R	A	C	K
■	■	■	A	■	C	■	17 P	■	E	■	K	■
18 M	19 I	R	R	O	R	S	O	F	T	■	F	■
■	C	■	N	■	O	■	K	■	U	■	O	■
20 T	O	W	E	R	S	■	21 E	R	R	O	R	S
■	N	■	R	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	D	■

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EXTERMINATE, EXTERMINATE..!(2)

Rod Lawton's finally got his Mac back. And it would seem that the members of the ACE team (and now half the art dept. too) are not alone in being addicted to that trivial, time-wasting game called **Daleks**. Since we reported (in last month's RAM) that Rod was finding it increasingly difficult to actually get down to some work because someone else was always using the Mac for a quick tin monster mash, we've had several different versions of the game come flooding through the door.

Nowadays, Rod's back to working on the Mac while Bob's off playing the CPC version of the game and Andy Wilton's playing the ST version. Andy Smith's twiddling his thumbs at the moment, waiting for an Amiga version to arrive (thanks to some kind reader). Curiously, none of the **Dalek** programs we've recieved are anything like the new version of the game. We've got Daleks/2.0 on all the Mac's too, but nobody seems to play it, preferring the earlier versions (Daleks or Daleks/+).

There's a reason for this - the later version offers speedier daleks, a permanent hi-score table, and one or two other tweaks, but fails to impress. It's a perfect example of programming progress failing to improve on a game idea whose simplicity simply doesn't need tarting up. By comparison, the new version's awful, it lacks addictive gameplay and 9 out of 10 people who expressed a preference, said they prefered the old version.

Strange isn't it? How 'improvements' in a sequel can often ruin whatever it was that made the first game so good. Remember the disappointment you felt when you loaded up **Thrust 2** for the first time?

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THE BLITTER END...

NO HAT REQUIRED?

Here at Blitter End we normally operate a stringent dress code. Even in these times of declining standards we feel that appearance matters, and nowhere more so than in the field of hats.

It is with considerable distaste then that we note the photo of the ACE editorial team and art supremo Trevor Gilham on page 5, with not a hat between them. We'd like to claim that this sans-chapeau behaviour was a rare lapse, but such is sadly not the case. Even though the shot was taken on the roof of the Future Publishing production department, where the risk of guano attack from nesting seagulls is considerable, these hat-haters recklessly spurned any form of protective headgear.

The problem is endemic. As this picture shows all too clearly, neither ACE Ad Manager Jon Beales nor Ad Executive Jennie Evans wears a hat. In fact, the only ACE team member properly attired headwise is art person Angela Neal - and she only put that baseball cap on for the camera. (Still, Ange is wearing one of those marvellously tasteful ACE T- shirts, so we can excuse the occasional bit of bareheadedness.)

HIER STEH' ICH, ICH KANN NICHT ANDERS.

Poor old Luther De Gale. Former Konami marketing man Luther is heavily involved in the Nintendo Games Console business these days, so naturally enough his Personal Computer Show stand is strongly angled that way. He's pictured here with the finished stand, but all is not entirely to his satisfaction. *"Spinal Tap"* devotees will grasp the problem immediately - they got the units wrong!

Such a compact stand does have its advantages of course - in particular it saves a vast amount of money by fitting into a mere 1sq foot of floorspace - but Luther won't settle for anything short of full size. Unconfirmed source tell us that the stand contractors are now looking for a much bigger cornflake packet and about 2 acres of sticky-backed plastic.

I said feet, not centimetres!

THIS IS AN OOPS!, GARY.

Last month's ACE was about as packed full of neat stuff as you could reasonably ask for - provided you're an OOPS! fan, that is. Mistake-lovers the world over will have thrilled to the sheer volume of errors on the contents pages. A strategy feature, the music pages and some obscure section called The Blitter End were all exquisitely misdescribed in a fine display of synchronised OOPSing.

After that almost any kind of foul-up would look mundane, but let's not ignore the contribution made by that rather special photo transposition on pages 18 and 19. 'Save those colonists, waste those aliens!' the caption commanded. What with? Even Gary Lineker can't save the universe with a football!!

Last but by no means least, how about that Spectrum Spindizzy poke on page 85? The mighty Tricks'n'Tactics machine turned out a bit of a boo-boo on line 20, sad to say. This should have read:

```
20 IF L<>4022 THEN PRINT "DATA ERROR":STOP
```

...but – for technical reasons we Blitter-ites don't pretend to understand – the quotes got all snarled up.

COMPETITION WINNER

Remember our ACE/Gremlin competition in Issue 11? **Kevin Tidy** from Bristol certainly does. He managed to answer the three questions correctly (Kenneth More took the lead role in Reach For The Sky, Chuck Yeager was the first pilot to break the sound barrier and Gary Powers carried out the forced landing in a famous international incident), and get his name pulled from the sack first. Kevin's now got an agonising decision to make - should he take those £700 worth of flying lessons (or just simple flying time) or should he go for that scrummy radio-controlled Kyosho Zero Fighter? Ah, well, some guys have all the luck, don't they?

...AND MORE WINNERS!

These lucky, lucky, people managed to get their entries pulled from the sack in the ACE Survey Prize Draw. They each now win a 900+ game, selected by the ACE team, for their machine - absolutely free!

Kieron White, Wimborne. **Mr A. Still**, Bournemouth. **Raymond Oyediran**, London. **G. Luzio**, Cambridge. **Mark Senior**, Barnsley.

ACE AT THE PC SHOW

Come and meet the ACE team at the PC Show at Earls Court on September 16-18th. You'll find us on stand 2628 with the rest of Future Publishing's mags. If you're lucky you may be able to

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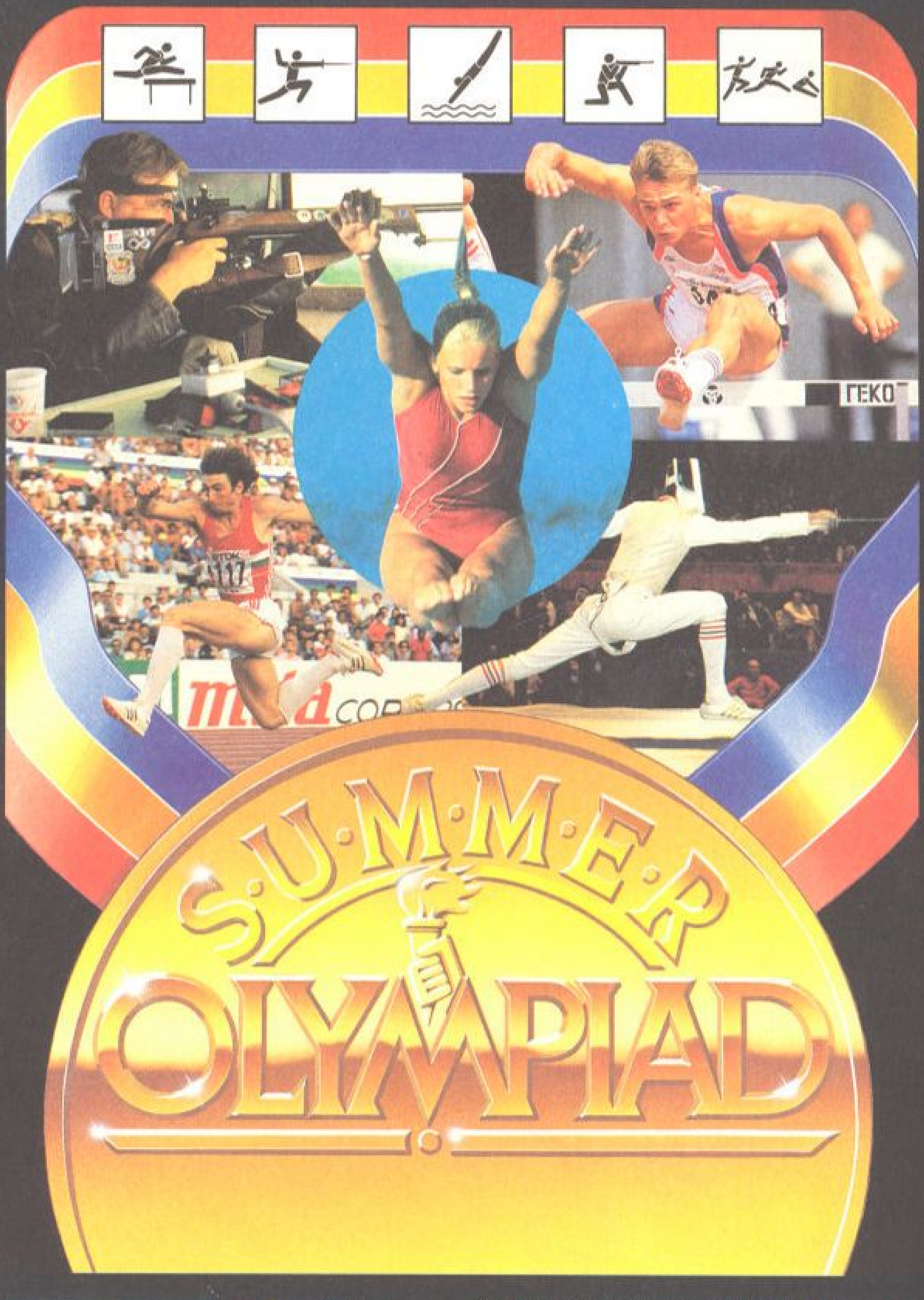

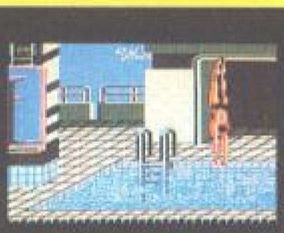

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